

**“England Expects ...” And All That:  
The Visual Memory of Horatio, Lord Nelson**

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By

Brigid Ward

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## Abstract

The project of this thesis has been to examine the results of the development of the reputation and concept of the historical figure of Horatio Nelson as symbol of masculinity from nearly the beginning of the myth-making and mythologizing in the nineteenth century to the present. There have been several studies recently that examine Nelson the myth, Nelson as legend, Nelson as hero: they study the process of the development of this character. As a result of the mythologizing the history of Horatio Nelson is likely lost. However the *memory* of Nelson – a very different thing and the focus of this thesis – has been reinforced through commemoration throughout the two centuries since his death coming to a logical conclusion in 2008. This was done in both the public sphere (in the form of monuments) and in the private sphere (Nelson was *merchandised*) with the logical result in the first part of the twenty-first century being a manifestation of Nelson in fan culture on the internet. He has now been essentialised, extrapolated, and used in a wide variety of ways to navigate masculinity by both genders.

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## Introduction:

In 1930, W. C. Sellar and R. J. Yeatman published *1066 and All That: A Memorable History of England comprising all the parts you can remember, including 103 Good Things, 5 Bad Kings, and 2 Genuine Dates*. In the introduction, the authors assert that “History is not what you thought. *It is what you can remember*. All other history defeats itself.”<sup>1</sup> The book, though a work of humour, presents a surprisingly perceptive notion: History depends on memory. The historian must navigate personal, shared and social memories and be aware that there are influential forces outside academic history-writing that dictate how an event or a person is remembered, and, in addition, that everyone has their own relationship to the *lieu de mémoire* – literally “site of memory” – upon which these meanings are placed. Over time, the *lieu de mémoire* acquires layers upon layers of meaning, and apocryphal anecdotes become valuable beyond the life-as-example. Nelson has been an imperial hero; he has been a flawed hero; he has been an underdog fighting his way up through the ranks. He has become the trademark of Admiral Nelson Spiced Rum (whose website tells us that “Matrimony wasn’t Lord Nelson’s style”<sup>2</sup>), and of Admiral’s Cheap Car Insurance in the UK.<sup>3</sup> The history of Horatio Nelson may be lost, but the memory of Nelson, famously constructed for public consumption,<sup>4</sup> has been reinforced through commemoration throughout the two centuries since his death. His memory has been fragmented to hold a variety of meanings in the twenty-first century.

My personal introduction to the historical figure of Nelson came in the form of a cat. My family is not of English descent at all (primarily Irish, Welsh and Scottish), but on my father’s side, lived in Ontario until the 1940s. As such, my grandfather used to read *Chums* magazine (for “The

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<sup>1</sup> W. C. Sellar and R. J. Yeatman. *1066 And All That*. (Penguin: Middlesex, England, 1960), pg. 5.

<sup>2</sup> “Admiral Nelson’s Spiced Rum.” <http://www.admiralnelsonsrums.com/index2.htm>, (accessed April 6, 2008.)

<sup>3</sup> “Admiral’s Cheap Car Insurance.” <http://www.admiral.com/>, (accessed April 6, 2008)

<sup>4</sup> See, for example, Marianne Czisnik. *Horatio Nelson: A Controversial Hero*. (London: Hodder Education, 2005), Adam Nicolson. *Seize the Fire: Heroism, Duty and the Battle of Trafalgar*. (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2005) and Timothy Jenks “Contesting the Hero: The Funeral of Admiral Lord Nelson.” *The Journal of British Studies*. Vol. 39, No. 4. (Oct., 2000), pp. 422-453.

Boys of the Empire upon which the sun never sets") and so did my father. The context was such that Nelson, and other British heroes, were presented to my grandfather and my father as though it went without saying that those who spoke English in Canada were clearly British; or at least should aspire to be. Nelson the cat had likely been a farm cat and he had seen better days: he was scarred down one side of his face and his right paw had been badly damaged. My father named him Nelson, and explained to me, when I wanted to call him Merlin, why Nelson was so much more appropriate. I agreed with him entirely once I'd heard the story.

Four years later, I was in the Walker Art Gallery in Liverpool where there hang two paintings of the Battle of Trafalgar. One was painted by Benjamin West in 1806, the other by Daniel Maclise in the late 1850s and early 1860s. I was struck with the differences between the paintings. West's painting is epic, monumental and theatrical, following the style of the day. Maclise's depicts a pell-mell battle, with injured sailors, frightened powder monkeys and few people noticing Nelson's collapse at all. The differences begged the question: "Why?" Further research revealed that these are only two of likely millions of images, including other paintings, popular images, and, in the twentieth century, films and the internet.

As part of the primary research for this project, I was able to visit several of the major archives and museums in England connected to Nelson and maritime history, including the National Maritime Museum in Greenwich and the Royal Naval Archives in Portsmouth, as well as several other archives and libraries that housed significant sources. Among these others were the National Art Library at the Victoria & Albert Museum and the Walker Art Gallery in Liverpool. I moved through the spaces occupied by the monuments I discuss in Chapter One (except for the monument in Bridgetown, Barbados) and was granted permission to photograph objects in places where this would not normally be allowed. In each of these places, the trace of the Nelson legend, and in the case of the city of Portsmouth, the trace of Nelson himself, is evident not only in the physical

remnants, but in the people. Collections managers, archivists, librarians, security guards, former sailors and restaurant owners wanted to relay that they *knew who he was* and tell a story of their personal experience of the Admiral. In Ireland, two builders talked about the relationships between England and Ireland. On the Isle of Wight, an American bartender talked about monuments to Nelson he'd seen in the British West Indies. A retired sailor in Portsmouth quizzed me on Nelson trivia. When I told them what I was studying, most people knew who I meant and had a personal memory to relate.

The *lieu de mémoire* of Nelson became an all-encompassing concern nearly as soon as he died. Since then, the seeds of what appears to a modern reader to be an appallingly biased account of the life of the admiral have acquired multiple layers of meaning. The memory of Nelson has been reinforced nearly continually throughout the two centuries since his death. He now holds, as a result of the reinforcement of his public memory through a variety of means, an essentialised and extrapolated meaning in the twenty first century.

## Memory

Maurice Halbwachs first presented the idea of a "collective memory" in the early twentieth century.<sup>5</sup> There are now different terms used to discuss the concept: social memory, shared memory, collective unconscious and national imaginary. Some theorists make distinctions between terms (Pierre Nora uses "history" as dead and "memory" as living)<sup>6</sup> and some use them interchangeably.<sup>7</sup> Fundamentally, history *needs* memory for it to keep going,<sup>8</sup> but because a group does not recall "spontaneously and collectively" as an individual does,<sup>9</sup> social memory requires external

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<sup>5</sup> Maria G. Cattell and Jacob J. Climo. "Meaning in Social Memory and History: Anthropological Perspectives," in Jacob J. Climo and Maria G. Cattell, eds. *Social Memory and History*. (New York: AltaMira Press, 2002.), pg. 3-4.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> Arthur Marwick. *The New Nature of History: knowledge, evidence, language*. (Chicago: Lyceum Books, inc., 2001), pg. 31-32.

<sup>9</sup> James Fentress and Chris Wickham. "Social Memory." (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1992.) pg 127.



perpetuation. This can be done unjustly and with some degree of political interest. In the sphere of historical trauma, there is sometimes a discrepancy between what is known to have happened in cultural memory and what is taught.<sup>10</sup> Thus, whoever writes the history can assert power over what is remembered.<sup>11</sup>

Memory exists separate from the physical world, but is anchored within it. Nora's *lieux de mémoire*; literally "sites of memory,"<sup>12</sup> are the bridge between the two. The "site" is not limited to a physical place (Trafalgar Square) but expands to include concepts (sacrifice), phrases (England Expects that Every Man Will Do His DUTY), or acts (the Bicentennial Celebration of the Battle of Trafalgar) that hold a specific meaning for a group of people.<sup>13</sup> They can also have personalised meanings, as there is no homogeneous mass to which a stone pillar, for example, will mean the same thing.<sup>14</sup> *Lieux de mémoire* represent something in the present of the observer, rather than holding the entirety of their own original meaning,<sup>15</sup> substituting the "site" for the more abstract concept it embodies and keeping the selected message in the public consciousness. To illustrate, "Penny Lane" in Liverpool was named for the slaver James Penny. A recent proposal to change the name because of slavery associations was met with resistance because it holds a stronger place in memory associated with the Beatles' song.<sup>16</sup>

David Lowenthal discusses "heritage" as a label that grants protection to stories, thoughts and objects; it preserves sites of memory. Since the 1970s, he writes, there has been an increased readiness and pressure to commemorate past events based only on what has been designated

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<sup>10</sup> Roger I. Simon, Sharon Rosenberg, and Claudia Eppert, Eds. "Introduction: Between Hope and Despair." *Between Hope and Despair: Pedagogy and the Representation of Historical Trauma*. (Rowman and Littlefield, 2000.), pg. 1.

<sup>11</sup> Paul Connerton. *How Societies Remember*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pg. 1.

<sup>12</sup> Peter Carrier. "Places, Politics and the Archiving of contemporary Memory in Pierre Nora's *Les Lieux de mémoire*," in Susannah Radstone, *Memory and Methodology*. (Oxford: Berg, 2000), pg. 39.

<sup>13</sup> Carrier, 39.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid*, at 40.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid*, at 42.

<sup>16</sup> Simon Jenkins, *The Guardian*, Friday, July 14, 2006.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/Columnists/Column/0,1820214,00.html>, (accessed April 8, 2007)

“heritage.”<sup>17</sup> He also writes that, increasingly, the public understanding of the past depends not on critical analysis of documents, but on popular coffee-table books, commemorative objects and celebrations. Public understanding of history becomes more a collective memory based in *lieux de mémoire*<sup>18</sup> than in academic “scientific” history writing after the fashion of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Françoise Choay has pointed out the effects of this kind of behaviour:

The concept of heritage leads thus to a semantic homogenization of values, one that would reproduce itself, by way of a different process, when the architectures of the nineteenth and twentieth-centuries were progressively absorbed into the category of historic monuments in the wake of the Second World War.<sup>19</sup>

Additionally, it will be vehemently protected. A physical *lieu de mémoire* that is declared a heritage site will become entrenched as part of the physical space of a city, and performative acts will be defended *because it is tradition*.

A *lieu de mémoire* is not something fixed nor in the specific case universally understood. There is a prejudice that individual memory or collective memory cannot compare with “evidence”; it is simply not good enough.<sup>20</sup> However, Nora’s idea of the *lieu de mémoire* places memory in equal authority:

Memory is life .... It remains in permanent evolution.... History, on the other hand, is the reconstruction, always problematic and incomplete, of what is no longer. Memory is a perpetually actual phenomenon ... history is a representation of the past.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> David Lowenthal. *Possessed by the Past: the heritage crusade and the spoils of history*. (New York : Free Press, 1996), pg. 2-4; Carrier, 38;

<sup>18</sup> Michael Confino. “Some Random Thoughts on History’s Recent Past,” *History and Memory*, Fall/Winter 2000, Vol. 12, Iss. 2, 40.

<sup>19</sup> Françoise Choay. *The Invention of the Historic Monument*. (Cambridge, U.K. ; New York : Cambridge University Press, 2001), pg. 66.

<sup>20</sup> Noa Gedi and Yigal Elam. “Collective Memory – What Is It?” in *History and Memory*. Spring/Summer 1996, Vol. 8, Iss. 1, pg 33.

<sup>21</sup> Pierre Nora, quoted in *Ibid*, at 33.

This is not to say that memory usurps academic history, only that it holds a significant position for navigating public understanding of an event. For example, there is a patchbox<sup>22</sup> in the collection of the National Maritime Museum in Greenwich, London, England, painted with the couplet: "The Vict'ry's won The Gallant Nelson cry'd/ He lived a Hero and a Hero dy'd." This object would perhaps be seen every day by an individual in their own home. It is far more likely to have a permanent impact on its owner than the sentence:

He expired at thirty minutes after four, -- three hours and a quarter after he had received his wound.<sup>23</sup>

or the passage:

The captain soon after left the cockpit; and at half after four his lordship expired, while Dr. Scott, the chaplain, was in the act of rubbing his breast, and Mr. Burke, the purser, was supporting the bed under his shoulders.<sup>24</sup>

This is not for any emotional, aesthetic or literary reason, but rather because the patchbox holds a symbolic place and the repetition of that phrase will remain in the memory of those who held, saw or possessed the box. Though these passages describe events from which a series of literal and symbolic meanings can be construed – literally his death, but symbolic in the first instance of his tenacity and in the second of how he was loved by his crew – the power of the memory and of the associations is greater than that of the phrases themselves. The memory of Nelson was built partially with phrases and sentences, but the phrases and sentences are symbols of the events that made Nelson. Nora says, almost cheekily: "Memory is absolute, while history can only conceive the relative."<sup>25</sup>

However, memory is unreliable. Individual memory is fallible: it can be discounted in the court of law by chance, worn away through the passage of time or the interference of illness. It also negates any kind of value judgement: memory of an event might be different for two people, but

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<sup>22</sup> The term "patchbox" may be debated as a descriptor of the objects; they could also be called snuffboxes. "Patchbox" will be used throughout this thesis because this is the term preferred by the National Maritime Museum and the boxes discussed come from the National Maritime Museum collection.

<sup>23</sup> Robert Southey. *Life of Nelson*. (New York: J. & J. Harper, 1830), pg. 302.

<sup>24</sup> T. O. Churchill. *Life of Lord Viscount Nelson, Duke of Bronte &c.* (London: Harrison and Rutter, 1810), pg. 85.

<sup>25</sup> Gedi and Elam, 33.

they both hold authority over their recollection. Collective memory can be shaped and presents a problem to the critical and literal mind: as Gedi and Elam point out: “*any* act, not just mental, is ‘absolutely and completely personal.’ Speaking of ‘collective action’ can hardly be justified even if every individual member of the group could be said to be acting in the same way.”<sup>26</sup> But, “history is what you can remember;” regardless of the literal meaning of a “collective memory,” through reinforcement there are a series of understandings perpetuated. If we are told what is important, or if it is implied that something is important, we build associations with it and bestow on and derive from it a series of meanings.

The act of recollection is performative, and recalled memory is what makes events meaningful within the historical narrative.<sup>27</sup> Paul Connerton’s example of the French Revolution is one of the most obvious: it stayed in the memory of those attempting to interpret their own time period well into the nineteenth century,<sup>28</sup> and, today, it has reached mythic symbolic proportions because it has remained in the social memory associated with anxiety, upheaval and instalment of a new order. In 1989, it was again thrust into public view: the strength of the surviving memory was buttressed by the bicentennial celebrations of it.<sup>29</sup> The Revolution itself relied on memory in order to define its own present in the narrative against the past through “*commemorative ceremonies* and ... *bodily practices*.” [Emphasis original]<sup>30</sup> The same could be said of the death of Nelson and the commemoration of the Battle of Trafalgar: it requires an understanding of the anxiety of the possible invasion of Great Britain to know how significant the victory was. However, as with most public commemoration, aspects of the events become extrapolated and obscured.

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<sup>26</sup> *Ibid*, at 35.

<sup>27</sup> Connerton, *passim*.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid*, at 7.

<sup>29</sup> Carrier, pg. 38; Michael F. Leruth. “Francois Mitterrand’s ‘Festival of the World’s Tribes’: the logic of exoticism in the French Revolution bicentennial parade.” *French Cultural Studies* v9.n1 (Feb 1998): pg. 51; Victor R. Greene. “Feasts and Celebrations in North American Ethnic Communities.” *Journal of American Ethnic History* v17 n3 (Spring 1998): pg. 129., among others.

<sup>30</sup> Connerton, 7.

## Lord Horatio Nelson<sup>31</sup>

Admiral Nelson has, since his death, become a *lieu de mémoire* of white British masculinity, sometimes as the perfect imperial hero, sometimes as daring protector of England, occasionally as virile and sexually powerful.<sup>32</sup> He lived from September 29, 1758 to October 21, 1805 when he died at the battle of Trafalgar.<sup>33</sup> He began his career in the Royal Navy under the sponsorship of his uncle, Captain Maurice Suckling, in 1771 on the 64-gun third-rate, *Raisonné*.<sup>34</sup> When much of the Navy was decommissioned in peace-time, Nelson worked on board the *Carcass* as a coxswain on an exploration mission<sup>35</sup> even though the mission explicitly stated “no boys” were allowed.<sup>36</sup> He was promoted very young to Lieutenant and then Post-Captain. He participated in many battles, among them The Battle of Teneriffe, The Glorious First of June, The Battle of the Nile, The Battle of Copenhagen and, mentioned before, the Battle of Trafalgar. In each of these, he played increasingly important roles. He was married to Frances Nesbit, a widow, in 1787,<sup>37</sup> and left her for Lady Emma

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<sup>31</sup> Nelson's full title is long and ungainly, and there is no standard of reporting it. His orders and titles included Knight of the Order of Bath and Duke of Bronte (a foreign title given him for his success at the Battle of the Nile.) His title at the time of his death was Horatio, 1<sup>st</sup> Viscount Nelson, Vice-Admiral, though he had held a Baronetcy, and a Barony. As such, even during his lifetime, he signified different things to different people. It bears mentioning however, that “Lord Nelson” or sometimes only “Nelson” was deemed sufficient in many nineteenth-century sources.

<sup>32</sup> 1066 *And All That* grants three paragraphs to him, clearly implying that he is one of the “memorable” figures from history:

Napoleon ought never to be confused with Nelson, in spite of their hats being so alike; they can most easily be distinguished from one another by the fact that Nelson always stood with his arm *like this*, while Napoleon always stood with his arms *like that*.

Nelson was one of England's most naval officers, and despised weak commands. At one battle when he was told that his Admiral-in-Chief had ordered him to cease fire, he put the telephone under his blind arm and exclaimed in disgust: “Kiss me, Hardy!”

By this and other intrepid manoeuvres the French were utterly driven from the seas. [ Sellar and Yeatman, 97.]

<sup>33</sup> See especially Czisnik; Adam Nicolson, *Seize the Fire*; Jenks, “Contesting the Hero”

<sup>34</sup> Roger Knight. *The Pursuit of Victory: the Life and Achievement of Horatio Nelson*. (London: Penguin, 2006), pg.26.

<sup>35</sup> Knight, 28; C. S. Forester. *Nelson: a biography*. (London: John Lane the Bodley Head, 1944, first published 1929), pg. 17.

<sup>36</sup> Churchill, 7; Forester, 17; Czisnik, 17.

<sup>37</sup> Knight, 657; Southey, 34-35.

Hamilton (married to Sir William Hamilton, British Ambassador to Naples) with whom he had a daughter, Horatia Nelson Thompson.<sup>38</sup>

Parts of Nelson's life, predictably, embarrassed the nineteenth century reading public; particularly his relationship with Emma Hamilton,<sup>39</sup> and his final request of his flag captain: "Kiss me, Hardy." Many nineteenth century biographies of Nelson omit these,<sup>40</sup> but, repeated in early biographies are anecdotes of doubtful reliability about Nelson's boyhood, supporting his fighting spirit, his bravery and his pluck.<sup>41</sup> Much is made of his promotion through the ranks without any outside help and his appointment as Post-Captain at twenty-one. Inevitably, there are episodic recountings of his most famous moments, such as his "turning a blind eye," when he placed the telescope to his blind eye in order to not see a flag signal of orders he did not agree with. Much of what Nelson *did* was sacrificed to what Nelson *was* and what he needed to be: that is, a hero.

Until the mid-twentieth century, he was portrayed as a one-dimensional character; this is no longer the case. The current trend among biographers (though there are still some who like to surreptitiously imply Nelson's heroism) is to point out how deliberate the creation of his reputation was and how artificial the character portrayed. Marianne Czisnik, a modern biographer, noted:

... the remarkable degree to which traditional gender roles are challenged [in Nelson and Emma's letters to each other]. It is hard, if not impossible, to find traces in

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<sup>38</sup> Knight, 642; Czisnik, *passim*; Southey, 131.

<sup>39</sup> The public was understandably interested in Nelson's last moments, but when Nelson's surgeon Beatty published his account, his description of Nelson's pain and last words were thought to be unseemly and the account was named a "breach of Christian charity" because it had been so personal. [Letter to the editor in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, quoted in Czisnik, 81.]

<sup>40</sup> Czisnik, 82-83.

<sup>41</sup> A popular example is a story of Nelson's childhood bravery. When a small boy, apparently, Nelson was out alone playing at Burnham Thorpe (his childhood home in Norfolk), and, failing to come in for tea, sent his family into a panic. As Nelson had been a sickly child (also something that makes it into most early biographies of him) he was a source of worry anyhow, but on this particular occasion, gypsies were involved. When he was finally found, his grandmother asked him: "Did you not see fear?" to which he replied: "No, grandmamma, I did not see fear, what is it?" Another version has his grandmother asking if fear had not driven him home, to which Nelson replies: "Fear never came near me!" the implication in both being that fear is so foreign to him that he doesn't even understand the term. Though there are differences in the narrative, this story and others like it are often included to establish the character of Nelson as one would a fictional character. There is no concrete evidence that these stories are fabrications, but the considerable amount of inevitability they give to Nelson's famous fearlessness buttresses the possibility that they were created, or at least modified, for this very purpose.

Nelson's relations with Lady Hamilton of the traditional concept of male/female behaviour and it is even possible to speak of them reversing gender roles.<sup>42</sup>

Brian Lavery, citing as evidence that Nelson and Emma only had one child, has also implied that Nelson, at least sexually, was not a dominating person, nor one with a significant sexual appetite.<sup>43</sup> Czisnik and Lavery are challenging the hypermasculine reputation that has taken over the identity of Nelson as historical actor.

Adam Nicolson quotes evidence from the *Naval Gazette* that Nelson was not universally loved:

Even in the weeks before Trafalgar, informed opinion protested at this singling out of Nelson by the populace. The *Naval Chronicle*, in its issue for July and August 1805, regretted 'that ill-judged, and over-weening popularity, which tends to make another Demi-god of Lord Nelson, at the expense of all other officers in the service, many of whom possess equal merit, and equal abilities, and equal gallantry' ...<sup>44</sup>

Nicolson also asserts elsewhere that Trafalgar should not be celebrated because of how gruesome an event it actually was.<sup>45</sup> Joseph F. Callo recounts undignified and questionable events of Nelson's life, such as a court-martial for authorizing an execution,<sup>46</sup> and losing a marriage prospect after the woman was rescued from a bolting horse by another young man.<sup>47</sup> Roger Knight, though he falls short of actually listing Nelson's faults, is derogatory about past biographers: "Nelson's early biographers glossed over his weaknesses as systematically as they overlooked his liaison with Emma Hamilton."<sup>48</sup> The most vitriolic, Ben Macintyre, accuses Nelson of war crimes, and discusses his vanity and self-creation as a celebrity.<sup>49</sup> These writers are attempting to counteract one of the most

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<sup>42</sup> Czisnik, 61.

<sup>43</sup> Brian Lavery. *Horatio Lord Nelson*. (New York: New York University Press, 2003), pgs. 102-104.

<sup>44</sup> Adam Nicolson, *Seize the Fire*, xx.

<sup>45</sup> Adam Nicolson, paraphrased in Andrew Roberts. "Trafalgar then & now" in *New Criterion*. Vol 24, iss. 1 (September 2005), pg. 47.

<sup>46</sup> Joseph F. Callo. *Nelson in the Caribbean: The Hero Emerges, 1784-1787*. (Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 2003), pg. 5

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid*, at. 10.

<sup>48</sup> Knight, 548-549.

<sup>49</sup> Ben Macintyre paraphrased in Andrew Roberts, pg. 47.

powerful reputations in British history, but what these efforts point to is the overwhelming *strength* of the mythologized Nelson.

## Nelson and Masculinity through Visual Culture

There was, beginning in the nineteenth century, a correlation between nationalism, war and masculinity.<sup>50</sup> The hopes of empire, after all, rested on the shoulders of the military:

... Nelson and Wellington have historically occupied the symbolic centre of English national identity. Later, during the growth of popular imperialism in the mid-to-late nineteenth century, heroic masculinity became fused in an especially potent configuration with representations of British imperial identity ... A 'real man' would henceforth be defined and recognized as one who was prepared to fight (and, if necessary, to sacrifice his life) for Queen, Country and Empire.<sup>51</sup>

But there were a variety of masculinities, as there are now.<sup>52</sup> It was in the nineteenth century that "feminism" and "homosexual" first appeared.<sup>53</sup> Part of manly behaviour in the mid- to late-nineteenth century for the middle classes in Britain was the role that a man had to play in the home;<sup>54</sup> "manliness" was preferred over "masculinity,"<sup>55</sup> and referred to behaviour rather than a biological condition.<sup>56</sup> But despite the *actual* role or variety of masculinity of an individual, the idea correlating bravery, willingness to sacrifice oneself for the sake of King (and later, Queen) and Country, power and Christian will were what they were presented with. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, when domesticity was the norm, extreme "manliness" popped up in literature by H. Rider Haggard among others,<sup>57</sup> as an escape for the domestic man and a template for the late-nineteenth-century

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<sup>50</sup> Graham Dawson. *Soldier Heroes: British Adventure, the Empire and the imagining of Masculinity*. (London: Routledge, 1994), *passim*.

<sup>51</sup> Dawson, 1.

<sup>52</sup> Mairtin Mac an Ghaill, ed. *Understanding Masculinities: Social Relations and Cultural Arenas*. (Philadelphia: Open University Press, 1996), *passim*.

<sup>53</sup> Elaine Showalter. *Sexual Anarchy: Gender and Culture at the Fin de Siècle*. (New York: Viking, 1990), pg. 3.

<sup>54</sup> John Tosh, *A Man's Place: Masculinity and the Middle-Class Home in Victorian England*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), *passim*.

<sup>55</sup> Mac an Ghaill, 209; John Tosh and Michael Roper. *Manful Assertions: Masculinities in Britain since 1800*. (London: Routledge, 1991), pg. 1-4; and Tosh, *A Man's Place*, 111.

<sup>56</sup> Tosh and Roper, *passim*; and Tosh, *passim*.

<sup>57</sup> Tosh, 174-177.



Imperial Hero.<sup>58</sup> Acknowledging the anxiety over feminism, homosexuality and other new sexually-based realities, perhaps not coincidentally a major upsurge in Nelson-worship coincides with this time period.<sup>59</sup>

The relationship between Nelson and masculinity has been changeable. Nelson's relationship with Emma presented him as virile but also as emasculated: she had famous control of him.<sup>60</sup> Despite this, he was incredibly "manly": popularly understood to have been small, ill and disabled, he strove to do what was asked of him. In the twenty-first century, Nelson is "a bit of a lad,"<sup>61</sup> because, among other reasons "matrimony wasn't [his] style."<sup>62</sup> As a historical figure, Nelson's reputation operates as part of the "Brideshead phenomena" named after the 1981 BBC miniseries based on Evelyn Waugh's novel *Brideshead Revisited* – that is, by presenting a select series of attributes, wrong that he has done can be written off as reasonable within the time period presented.<sup>63</sup>

In light of the massive amount of work that has been done on the manipulation of the life and history of Lord Nelson, and the deliberate attempts made to use Nelson as an example, it would be redundant to discuss how he became a hero and a symbol of white, British masculinity through words and history books. The most insidious way that Nelson-as-symbol entered the popular consciousness in the 200+ years since his death has been through the visual culture. Nelson's image – easily summarized visually in an empty sleeve – was present to an overwhelming number of people. He died not only in the correct manner to be made a hero, but also at the correct time. Nelson, as one of the first celebrities (in the sense that his name gained household usage) continues to be a visual symbol in the western world, albeit with a different set of connotations than he originally had.

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<sup>58</sup> Martin Francis. "The Domestication of the Male? Recent Research on Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century British Masculinity." *The Historical Journal*. 45, 3 (2002), pg. 643.

<sup>59</sup> Cziganski, 91.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid*, at 71.

<sup>61</sup> June Purvis. "A great commander, and a bit of a lad: historian June Purvis gives her very personal reflections on attending the ceremonies on HMS Victory on Trafalgar Day 2005." *History Today* 56.1 (Jan 2006): pg. 27.

<sup>62</sup> "About the Admiral." Admiral Nelson's Rum. <http://www.admiralnelsonsrums.com/index2.htm>, (accessed July 19, 2007)

<sup>63</sup> Ludmilla Jordanova. *History in Practice*. (New York: Hodder Education, 2000), pg. 131.

## Chapters

Sellar and Yeatman's work lampoons the style of history that they were taught as students in public schools and later at Oxford where they met. What they used as source material, I did too. The ridiculousness of their writing seems outlandish in the late twentieth century (asserting at one point, that History "came to a ."<sup>64</sup> when Britain ceased being "top nation" after the First World War) but a reading of nineteenth-century biographies of Nelson will frighteningly imply that Sellar and Yeatman's satire was much more subtle at the time than it appears in the present. As primary research for my thesis, I read numerous nineteenth-century biographical works on Nelson, including Robert Southey's *Life of Nelson*, T. O. Churchill's *Life of Nelson*, *Nelsonian Reminiscences* by G. S. Parsons, *Memoirs of Lady Hamilton* (author anonymous), and *Pictures from the Life of Nelson* by W. Clark Russell, as well as shorter biographical sketches in larger "Boy's Own" type books.

The process of research and writing has led me to realise that there are far more aspects to the representation of Nelson than could ever be addressed in one thesis. There are aspects of class and race that effect how he was presented. There is a whole world of research that could be done on colonized peoples' relationship to the image of Nelson through monuments and the popular imagery they experienced under British education. Similarly, there are incredible resources to expand on the historiography of Nelson, and a project could be done on each one of the archives and databases consulted. The methodology of my thesis emerged from this. Upon returning from my preliminary research trip to England, I had obtained more than six hundred images from various archives and monumental sites. Because of the sheer number of images of Nelson available, each chapter required selection of a few representative examples. Using biographies, contemporary newspaper reports, and secondary sources, as well as immersing myself in the volume of the images I gathered, I chose

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<sup>64</sup> Sellar and Yeatman, 123.

images to discuss based on what they had in common with a larger body of images, or, in the case of monuments, the significance of each.

This thesis is divided into three chapters, discussing the *lieux de mémoire* of Nelson in the public space, in the private space and in cyberspace. Chapter One addresses public monuments to Nelson. As examples, the Nelson Pillar and the Nelson Monument in National Heroes Square in Bridgetown, Barbados, will be used to discuss the colonial uses of Nelson monuments, and the exercise of power that is symbolised by the construction of British monuments in colonial holdings. Trafalgar Square and Nelson's Column in London represent Nelson as colonial symbol, but in a different context, as they are shown on the home territory. The final monuments discussed are those in the British city of Portsmouth, where the meaning is not entirely about British power, but more site-specific because of Portsmouth's history as a major naval base.

Chapter Two considers Nelson in the private space of the home. The examples used are a jug and a patchbox from the National Maritime Museum collection in Greenwich, and a book from the National Art Library at the Victoria and Albert Museum. This chapter is somewhat more speculative as these objects are ephemeral and not tied to location as Nelson Monuments are. The chapter attempts to examine the power of the "merchandised" image of Nelson, and the power of this kind of image in the private space.

The final chapter examines Nelson in cyberspace. Nelson is represented on the internet in the same way as many contemporary movie stars and musicians. Though this may initially seem surprising, it can also be seen as the logical conclusion to how he has been continuously represented and re-presented over the previous two centuries of commemoration. He has come to be used as a symbol of a masculinity that is consistent with nineteenth-century representations of him, but with some noteworthy differences such as the variety of masculinities he represents. Several examples of

internet-based imagery will be discussed, such as fanvids and livejournal icons, in the context of twenty-first century internet fan culture.

## Chapter 1: Nelson in the Memorial Landscape

The most obvious example of a *lieu de mémoire* is the memorial monument. It holds a literal, physical place, and as such has a physically concrete presence to reinforce continual remembrance. Monuments deliberately support specific memory through the physical space they occupy. It is not an accident of history: they sustain, in the most visually basic way, the wishes of the committee or group that created them. The apparent simplicity and singularity of a monument are deceptive because it communicates, in a visually simple, symbolic way, a very complex message. The sheer cost of a monument means that there is a kind of permanence to this complex message. Even after the monument is removed or destroyed, damaged or defaced, the space it occupied retains traces of its presence and power, though often with an altered message. It is virtually impossible to completely remove the *lieu de mémoire* of a monument once it's been erected, despite how it may appear. Even with the destruction of a monument, the reassigned meaning depends on the previous meanings to build its own. In the case of Horatio Nelson, the monuments were often used consciously, with this in mind.

The "historic monument" dates to around the time of the French Revolution, when the term first came into usage.<sup>65</sup> Before the French Revolution and the Napoleonic wars, non-religious monuments were created almost exclusively for personal mourning or veneration.<sup>66</sup> During the Revolution, there was a fear that the loss of monuments would lead to a loss of pre-Revolution culture, as much of the destruction amounted to "Ideological Vandalism," or destruction made with a political point in mind:

Monuments that were demolished, damaged or disfigured by decree or with the consent of the Revolutionary committees were so treated out of hatred for the powers and values incarnated by the clergy, the monarchy, and feudalism; their

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<sup>65</sup> Choay, 64.

<sup>66</sup> Rodney Mace. *Trafalgar Square: Emblem of Empire*. (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1976), pg. 49.

destruction amounted to an act of rejection with respect to a group of assets whose inclusion would sully the national heritage by imposing upon it the emblems of an overturned order.<sup>67</sup>

And, tellingly, the sympathetic artist David in fact designed monuments to the Revolution and the new order to be literally built upon the rubble produced by the destruction of the old monuments.<sup>68</sup> Also in recognition of the significance of monuments, Alexandre du Sommerard, of the French *noblesse du robe*, attempted to salvage as much of national monuments as he could, to try to preserve the Ancien Regime.<sup>69</sup> Existing historic monuments, as a connection to a nation's past, began to be treated with a reverence that up to that point had been reserved for religious statuary.<sup>70</sup> Memorial monuments created at the beginning of the nineteenth century were understood to have this kind of significance and were designed to be a *lieu de mémoire* that brought to mind a series of meanings and an understanding of the past. Coincidentally, this time period overlaps Nelson's life and death; he was a prime candidate for the new model of didactic statuary.<sup>71</sup>

Monuments, for the most part, exist in public or semi-public space. Though they are created for a particular group, by a particular group, they are viewed across class divisions and across nationalities:

The historic monument's *distribution area* has now become worldwide: on the one hand, usually on the occasion of colonial expansion (in India, Indochina, Latin America), Western archaeology and ethnology annexed monuments of faraway civilizations that did not belong to Mediterranean antiquity. On the other, the concept of the historic monument and its institutionalization spread beyond the confines of Europe and its subject territories.<sup>72</sup>

Memorial monuments maintain the presence of the individual commemorated and the idea they represent after they are dead or cease to have influence; this gives them power. That monument

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<sup>67</sup> Choay, 71.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid*, at 72.

<sup>69</sup> Stephen Bann, *The Clothing of Clío: A Study of the representation of history in nineteenth-century Britain and France*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), pgs. 78-83.

<sup>70</sup> Choay, 91.

<sup>71</sup> Mace, 49.

<sup>72</sup> Choay, 115.

subscription committees knew this is implied by the presence of British Heroes not only in the British Isles, but abroad. British Colonial holdings were often forced to try to imitate England. In order to encourage this, English claim was placed on a landscape through street names, renaming of landmarks and through monuments. There is a brilliant passage in Jamaica Kincaid's book of personal essays, *A Small Place*, where she describes this process as one who was colonized:

In the Antigua I knew, we lived on a street named after an English maritime criminal, Horatio Nelson, and all the other streets around us were named after some other English maritime criminals. There was Rodney Street, there was Hood Street, there was Hawke Street, and there was Drake Street.<sup>73</sup>

The lasting effects of aggressive cultural colonization, she tells us, leave these marks on the urban landscape.

The National Maritime Museum (NMM) in Greenwich, England, recalls as much of British Maritime history as it deems appropriate. One way that it disseminates this is through a database of Royal Navy memorial monuments. The database is searchable by the name, location, ship, artist, or cause of death. On record, there are thirty-three memorials to Nelson. This does not count the numerous streets, parks and pubs named directly after him, or named in some way associated with him.<sup>74</sup> He is one of the most memorialised figures in the database: for example, the eighteenth-century Admiral Rodney gets three listings, Admiral Cornwallis only one (which, in addition, he must *share* with Nelson and a handful of others) and Admiral Hawke, who has been described as "a Nelsonian hero *avant la lettre*,"<sup>75</sup> is not memorialised at all.<sup>76</sup>

The building of Nelson's reputation has been extensively investigated and a full literature review here would be unnecessary and likely impossible. Instead, glancing over a few specific

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<sup>73</sup> Jamaica Kincaid. *A Small Place*. (New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 1988), pg. 24.

<sup>74</sup> For example, *The Victory* is a pub in Portsmouth, *The Trafalgar* is a hotel in Swansea, there is a suburb in Ryde on the Isle of Wight that is mostly named after him. There is also a shopping centre in the North End of Saskatoon called "Trafalgar Square" with an image of the statue of Nelson on top of Nelson's Column in London on the sign. These are only a few examples.

<sup>75</sup> Adam Nicolson, 180.

<sup>76</sup> "Maritime Memorials" database. National Maritime Museum. <http://www.nmm.ac.uk/memorials/> (accessed January, 18, 2008)

examples will show that once Nelson's reputation had been thus built, his form, when placed in the landscape, carried a variety of connotative meanings. The Nelson Pillar in Dublin and the Nelson Monument in Barbados are two examples of the colonial presence of Nelson's form. These two were erected around the same time, and were dealt with by the colonised people of each country differently. The third example will be Nelson's Column and Trafalgar Square, because this was created during a different time period and to a different end. The fourth monumental presence will be Nelson in Portsmouth after the Second World War as a symbol upon which to mentally rebuild the Naval glory of England. In each of these cases, the way that the monument in question acts upon the landscape and upon different groups of people within the landscape is gendered, raced and classed.

Ireland was one of the first areas into which the English expanded, and indeed one of the last places to be decolonized. It was considered part of the British Isles until it was granted independence in 1921.<sup>77</sup> This was a position it had occupied officially since the 'plantations' set up in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries,<sup>78</sup> but in spirit from long before then.<sup>79</sup> The longest-lasting problems of colonialism in Ireland can be linked to this time period and the Plantation of Ulster,<sup>80</sup> which was a stronghold of British colonization from 1630 when an estimated 4,000 British families were settled there.<sup>81</sup> Ireland has also a long history of resistance against English colonialism, beginning with opposition to English rule in the 1560s and 70s,<sup>82</sup> and the first full-fledged rebellion in 1641.<sup>83</sup> Seamus Deane wrote that "Colonialism ... is a process of radical dispossession. A colonized people

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<sup>77</sup> David Harkness. *Ireland in the Twentieth Century: Divided Island*. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996) pgs. 40-41.

<sup>78</sup> P. J. Drudy. *Ireland: Land, Politics and People*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982) pg. 1.

<sup>79</sup> Jon. G. Crawford. "The Origins of the Court of Castle Chamber; A Star Chamber Jurisdiction in Ireland." *The American Journal of Legal History*, Vol. 24, No. 1 (Jan., 1980), pp. 22-55., pg. 25.

<sup>80</sup> Drudy, 1.

<sup>81</sup> Marilyn Cohen. "Religion and Social Inequality in Ireland." *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, Vol. 25, No. 1 (Summer, 1994), pp. 1-21, pg. 2.

<sup>82</sup> Crawford, 22.

<sup>83</sup> Marilyn Cohen, 3.



is without a specific history and even as in Ireland and other cases, without a specific language.”<sup>84</sup> It was seen that institution of British practices could be made to “civilize” the native Irish, and methods were put in place to turn the Irish into imitations of the British as cheaply and effectively as possible.<sup>85</sup> This included suppression and persecution of the dominant faith in Ireland (Roman Catholicism) and the Gaelic language.

The Nelson Pillar in Dublin (see figure 1) was designed by William Wilkins and Francis Johnston.<sup>86</sup> It was erected in 1808,<sup>87</sup> in Sackville Street, now O’Connell Street, on the central boulevard in

Figure 1:



The Nelson Pillar, c. 1830

front of the General Post Office. This was a heavily political act. In 1798, there had been an attempt by the United Irishmen to wrest power from the English. It had ended disastrously for the Irish, and so the placement of a Nelson Pillar in a main thoroughfare was an assertion of power. Nelson became a symbol of British strength, and by implication, Britain’s authority over the Irish.

In 1916, the Irish resisted English rule once again, in a marginally more successful uprising. A group of republicans drew up a statement for the provisional government of the Republic of Ireland. It was accompanied by gunfire and bombing at the General Post Office, and the group were captured by the English and executed. The occasion marked the beginning of the process leading to Irish Independence, as the event aroused Irish Republican pride. In light of the 1916 Easter Uprising, the place that the Nelson Pillar held in the public consciousness for its long residency in Sackville/O’Connell Street is underlined by its ultimate fate. W. B. Yeats wrote in 1923 that the

<sup>84</sup> Seamus Deane, quoted in Eamon Halpin. “Seamus Heaney and the Politics of Imagination.” In *Canadian Journal of Irish Studies*. December 1991. Vol 17. no.2, 64-71, pg. 64.

<sup>85</sup> Crawford, 23.

<sup>86</sup> Mace, 51.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*

Nelson Pillar “represents the feeling of Protestant Ireland for a man who had helped break the power of Napoleon.”<sup>88</sup> It held an entirely different memory for the Catholic Irish, and, accordingly, was dealt with as they saw fit: shortly after 1:00 am, Easter 1966, on the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Easter Uprising, the Irish Republican Army removed Nelson from the top of the Pillar with dynamite. The following week, it was decided that the whole pillar would be removed. For the Catholic Irish there had been the memory of the 1798 defeat, of the impotence of the 1916 uprising and of the long history of English oppression. When it was destroyed, memory of that space was reassigned.

It was unwelcome for the Catholic Irish from the very beginning. Though it was paid for by public subscription it cannot be assumed that this means it was widely desired, as the majority of the funds came from the Sackville-street Club and the Kildare-street Club, among others;<sup>89</sup> the membership of both of these was made up of professionals, landed gentry and aristocracy.<sup>90</sup> No other unveiling of a memorial “has excited less notice, or was marked with more indifference on the part of the Irish public ...”<sup>91</sup> or, betraying negative feeling: “The statue of Nelson records the glory of a mistress and the transformation of our senate into a discount office.”<sup>92</sup> James Joyce’s character, Stephen Dedalus, refers to Nelson as “the onehanded adulterer,” and the pillar a place where old women eat plums (“[t]hey put the bag of plums between them and eat the plums out of it ... spitting the plumstones slowly out between the railings”<sup>93</sup>) and young women kill themselves (“many most attractive and enthusiastic women also commit suicide by ... casting themselves ... from the top of Nelson’s Pillar...”<sup>94</sup>). Over the years, before it suffered its ultimate fate, there were numerous aborted efforts to move the Pillar to a less-prominent place. In 1891, when it was deemed an

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<sup>88</sup> Quoted in Mace, 51.

<sup>89</sup> Czisnik, 107.

<sup>90</sup> Frederick O’Dwyer. *The Architecture of Deane and Woodward*. (Oxford: Cork University Press, 1997), pg. 285.

<sup>91</sup> Patrick Henchy, *Nelson’s Pillar*, Dublin Historical Record, quoted in Mace, 51.

<sup>92</sup> Mace., 52.

<sup>93</sup> Joyce.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*

obstruction to traffic, a proposition to move it caused public debate,<sup>95</sup> and in 1925 it was reported in *The Times* that "...the Dublin City Commissioners have definitely decided to remove Nelson's pillar...."<sup>96</sup>

In addition to the political nature of the presence of a monument, its physical appearance needs to be addressed, too. It would be naïve to overlook the phallic shape of the Pillar. Keeping in mind the placement of the Pillar in a main thoroughfare, and Yeats' lines about the feelings of Protestant Ireland, there is a definite gendering of cultural groups within Ireland. The monument took for granted that the shape of Nelson would be understood, therefore the primary signification would be as symbol of British power. That Ireland was made a "mistress" or a kept woman by the presence of the Nelson Pillar in Sackville Street further emphasises this. It was an emasculating presence: British militaristic masculinity over the subjugated Irish people undermined Ireland's assertion of power over their own fate.

Also, Joyce's references suggest that Nelson's reputation is firmly connected to his injury and his sexuality. How Nelson lost his arm emphasises British naval prowess: England in the nineteenth century famously ruled the waves, thanks, superficially, to Nelson's victory at Trafalgar. Ironically, the fleet drew from Ireland as well, and there was a fair Irish presence at the actual Battle of Trafalgar,<sup>97</sup> but this was unimportant in the dominant discourses of the time. Nelson as adulterer standing in for the British nation, and Ireland as mistress implies a gendered English mastery over Ireland. That Ireland had a role in the battle was a non-issue, because as a nation at that time it was subject to England. Ireland was expected to appreciate its "protection" under England; though it is doubtful anyone asked them if they wanted it. As a means of interpreting the world and the Empire, England in the nineteenth century employed a system of dichotomies positioning the white, British

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<sup>95</sup> *The Times*, Saturday, Feb 14, 1891; pg. 8; Issue 33248; col B

<sup>96</sup> *The Times*, Wednesday, Oct 21, 1925; pg. 18; Issue 44098; col E

<sup>97</sup> "The Ayshford Trafalgar Roll." The Age of Nelson. <http://www.ageofnelson.org/TrafalgarRoll/index.html> (last accessed April 4, 2008)

male against the non-white, non-British, non-male Other.<sup>98</sup> The language used in the power relationship is not merely symbolic, metaphorical and descriptive, but extends beyond that to widen the gap between the feminized colonised and the manly colonizer.<sup>99</sup>

The spot where the Nelson Pillar stood is now occupied by the Dublin Spire, (figure 2) which has reassigned the space, covering all of the ground area that had been used by the Pillar. When discussing Nelson, two

Figure 2:



The Dublin Spire

Irish builders who were too young to have even been alive when the Pillar was destroyed asked: "Did you see what we did to our Nelson monument?"<sup>100</sup> Nelson's head from the statue on the top of the pillar is now on display in the Dublin Civic Museum, but it is not there as a symbol of British power. Rather, it represents Irish anti-colonial resistance. That it is separated from the body of the statue triggers the memory of the 1966 bombing of the Pillar and the 1916 uprising rather than the Battle of Trafalgar. There is a psychological scar on the landscape where the Nelson Pillar used to be, but symbolically, the *lieu de mémoire* has been re-inscribed so that the memory of Nelson in that space now carries the traces of the triumphal action of the IRA.

The history of the Nelson Monument in National Heroes Square (originally called "Trafalgar Square") Bridgetown, Barbados, is a little less dramatic, but very telling. (figure 3) The monument is a contemporary of the Nelson Pillar, having been unveiled in 1813, and designed by William Westmacott.<sup>101</sup> Westmacott, a favourite of the "Committee of Taste,"<sup>102</sup> was also responsible for the design of two other monuments to Nelson (in Birmingham and Liverpool) and a monument

<sup>98</sup> Tosh and Roper, 13; Catherine Hall. *White, Male and Middle-Class: Explorations in Feminism and History*. (New York: Routledge, 1992), pg. 207.

<sup>99</sup> Tosh and Roper, 13.

<sup>100</sup> In conversation with Brigid Ward, in Temple Bar, Dublin, August 2006.

<sup>101</sup> "Maritime Memorials: Memorial M2219." database. National Maritime Museum. <http://www.nmm.ac.uk/memorials> (accessed July 24, 2007)

<sup>102</sup> Marie Busco. "The Achilles in Hyde Park." *The Burlington Magazine*. Vol. 130, Number 1029. (December 1988), pg. 920.

memorialising the Duke of Wellington.<sup>103</sup> The monument in Barbados was erected through public subscription, which began in January 1806 as soon as news reached Barbados that Nelson had been killed. The contract for the design was made up in February 1810.<sup>104</sup> The monument in Barbados follows a standard type: Nelson leans against a broken mast in full dress uniform. The base of the pedestal upon which Nelson stands bears an inscription: "This statue was erected by the grateful inhabitants of Barbados ... by the public grant of the Colonial Legislature."<sup>105</sup>

Figure 3:



Nelson Monument in  
Bridgetown, Barbados

The relationship between the powerful and the powerless was different in Barbados than in Ireland. British colonisation of Barbados began in earnest in the 1660s, and it was soon after declared to be one of the most profitable colonized landmasses in British possession, producing cotton, indigo, tobacco and sugar, among other things.<sup>106</sup> The earliest Barbadians were the Amerindian group who had come to the island from South America,<sup>107</sup> though it is still popularly maintained – as it was declared in the seventeenth century – that the island was uninhabited.<sup>108</sup> This has long been a matter of debate, and finds its roots in the explicit contradiction between the colonial discourse of European settlement records and the Carib oral traditions bolstered by findings of archaeologists.<sup>109</sup> The Island Carib people are on record as being there at the time of Spanish colonization, and it is

<sup>103</sup> Marie Busco. *Sir Richard Westmacott*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pg. 43.

<sup>104</sup> Busco, *Sir Richard Westmacott*, 43.

<sup>105</sup> "Maritime Memorials: Memorial M2219." database. National Maritime Museum. <http://www.nmm.ac.uk/memorials/> (accessed July 24, 2007)

<sup>106</sup> Hilary Beckles. *A History of Barbados*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), *passim*.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid*, 1.

<sup>108</sup> Larry Gragg. *Englishmen Transplanted: The English Colonization of Barbados 1627-1660*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003.), pg. 28; Larry Luxner. "Barbados: the climate of success: this small Caribbean nation plans to lure a large sector of the tourism market, while opening opportunities for foreign investors." *Americas (English Edition)* May-June 2002 v54 i3 p36(8), pg. 36.

<sup>109</sup> J. Walter Fewkes. "Archaeology of Barbados" *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (Jan. 15, 1915), pp. 47-51; George Gmelch and Sharon Bohn Gmelch. "Barbados' Amerindian Past," *Anthropology Today*, Vol. 12, No. 1 (Feb., 1996), pp. 11-15.

fairly certain that they suffered heavily as a result of overwork and disease brought about by the European contact.<sup>110</sup> Records of first British contact (nearly a century later) report evidence of settlements, but no people.<sup>111</sup> The implication is that Spanish contact in some way led to the obliteration of the cultural group.

Beginning in the seventeenth century, the government of Barbados limited political power to white members of the upper classes.<sup>112</sup> Much of the wealth that granted this kind of power was made on the backs of imported slaves, who came to the island with the first wave of colonizers.<sup>113</sup> By the end of the eighteenth century, the vast majority of the inhabitants of the island were slaves of African descent, and the white minority had placed themselves in the position of a kind of aristocracy.<sup>114</sup> Unlike Ireland, where the British had attempted to rule a cultural group on their own land, Barbados was colonised simultaneously by the powerful few and the powerless many, importing the class system whole.

The death of Nelson was ostensibly the reason to place a monument to him in Barbados; it was not merely an act of memorialisation, however, but also a statement of power. Nelson had only once briefly been to Barbados, in 1805.<sup>115</sup> Westmacott's monument was officially launched in 1813. The slave trade had been outlawed in 1807 (thus causing a threat to the way that the island had functioned for the previous 150 years) and the atmosphere was right for violent anti-slavery resistance all throughout the British West Indies.<sup>116</sup> There had also been quite a few major plantation

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<sup>110</sup> Dave D. Davis and R. Christopher Goodwin. "Island Carib Origins: Evidence and Nonevidence" *American Antiquity*, Vol. 55, No. 1 (Jan., 1990), pp. 37-48, pg. 38; George Gmelch and Sharon Bohn Gmelch. *The Parish behind God's Back: The Changing Culture of Rural Barbados*. (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1997), pgs. 17-19.

<sup>111</sup> Davis and Goodwin, 38; Gmelch and Gmelch. *The Parish behind God's Back*, 17-19.

<sup>112</sup> Beckles, 10.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid*, at 18.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid*, at 42.

<sup>115</sup> Knight, 541.

<sup>116</sup> It should be noted that before abolition, Barbados was no longer reliant exclusively on the slave trade, though still reliant on slaves. Slave-owners had succeeded in promoting childbirth among their slaves, thus also promoting what they no doubt saw as an efficient use of resources. In light of this, it needs to be pointed out that Barbados was the site of the first of the three largest slave resistances between abolition and emancipation in 1838. [Beckles, 75-79]

families with American sympathies during the American Revolution.<sup>117</sup> The Royal Navy was used at this time to keep the slaves quiet and under control in response to anxiety over the sheer number of them and the possibility of a resistance movement.<sup>118</sup> The British success at the Battle of Trafalgar had meant, to a certain extent, security for Barbados.<sup>119</sup> Thus it might have been that the white British Barbadians pushed for the subscription as a way of drawing attention to continued British rule of the island and to emphasize that they still held allegiance to the British Crown.

The Nelson monument in Barbados is a *lieu de mémoire* of a very particular England. A recent tourism article points out that:

These days, the stereotypical Britain beloved by many Americans - afternoon tea with scones or watercress sandwiches, a mad passion for cricket, and a real appreciation for the Queen's Birthday - is easier to find in some of the former colonies than in Britain. In Barbados, the statue of Admiral Nelson pre-dates the more famous one in London's Trafalgar Square ...<sup>120</sup>

That Barbados' culture is more British than Britain is unsurprising, given the way it was so deliberately constructed. From the beginning, attempts were made to create on the island another England and it is divided into eleven Anglican parishes (as it was in 1641) rather than counties or provinces.<sup>121</sup> The first government of the island was as exact a model of the government back home as possible, limited only by the scale.<sup>122</sup> Another reason for the ubiquitous Britishness was that unlike other Caribbean islands, Barbados was under British rule exclusively (i.e. it did not change hands repeatedly between European colonial nations) from the time of colonization in the seventeenth century to independence in 1966.<sup>123</sup> Caribbean culture is a mixture of the imported cultures of the

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<sup>117</sup> *Ibid*, at 45; Luxner 42-43.

<sup>118</sup> Beckles, 33.

<sup>119</sup> Czisnik, 106.

<sup>120</sup> Henry Chase. "Barbados: the Lord's song." (people of African descent weave their culture into the island)(Travel Caribbean) *American Visions* Oct-Nov 1995 v10 n5 p48(3), pg. 2

<sup>121</sup> Luxner, 36.

<sup>122</sup> Gragg, 58.

<sup>123</sup> Luxner, 36-37.

African groups that the slaves belonged to and the culture of the ruling classes.<sup>124</sup> This is particularly evident in Jamaica, but the assertion can be made for most of the Caribbean islands, as a Creole culture emerged throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries<sup>125</sup> combining European, Indigenous and African cultures. The result of this was an integration of multiple sources in artistic endeavours, though oftentimes it is evident that the colonial discourses were internalized by the non-European artists. Jean D'Costa has drawn attention particularly to the self-destructive racism of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Jamaican Creole poets schooled in a British tradition, who, for example, internalized and used in their poetry the derogatory terms and attitudes applied to them. Most pertinent to this discussion, there were mythologized narratives in the Creole oral tradition in the seaports of Caribbean islands of the life of Nelson.<sup>126</sup>

Except for the name change to National Heroes Square there have not been actions to alter the *lieu de mémoire* of Nelson in that space. In fact, the name change further emphasises Nelson: he is now, implicitly, a National Hero, where before he referred superficially to a historic event. Perhaps this is because in the years immediately before Barbados became independent (and therefore was able to make decisions based on the interests of the majority) the British government recognised their responsibility for the existing bad conditions of the island and made elaborate efforts to raise the standard of living for the working classes,<sup>127</sup> or it could be because of the overwhelming hegemonic presence of British culture, a result of the process by which the island was colonised. The Nelson Monument has the potential to become, as the Nelson Pillar did in Dublin, a site of resistance, but has not as yet. It has survived thus far intact, and operates now also as a tourist

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<sup>124</sup> Jean D'Costa. "Oral Literature, Formal Literature: The Formation of Genre in Eighteenth-Century Jamaica." *The Eighteenth Century Journal*. Vol. 27, No. 4, African-American Culture in the Eighteenth Century. (Summer 1994), pp. 663-676. pgs. 666 – 667.

<sup>125</sup> Beckles, 33.

<sup>126</sup> D'Costa, 672.

<sup>127</sup> Richard Harris. "From miser to spendthrift: Public housing and vulnerability of colonialism in Barbados, 1935 to 1965.(New Perspectives on Public Housing Histories in the Americas)." *Journal of Urban History* 33.3 (March 2007): p443(24), *passim*.



attraction. Regardless, Nelson's presence in the collective memory of Barbados is split: when the monument was erected, he represented to the transplanted Englishmen a "Deliverer,"<sup>128</sup> and to the black and Creole Barbadians another symbol of British power.

There is a conceptual correlation between the type of masculinity that was reinforced in the nineteenth century and the way that colonialism played out. English identity in colonial society was long understood as the norm against which to measure the Other, even in the Other's own country.<sup>129</sup> In the first part of the Victorian era, for example, all that was required of a manly hero in literature was to have British (English) blood, and by the end of the nineteenth century, power was a major attribute of manliness.<sup>130</sup> In the colonial territories, the functioning of each gender was different than it was for the British at home: as men were to forge outward, claim the space and exercise power over it, women's role was reproduction. Women, for the most part, did not go out adventuring because of a perceived sexual danger they were in,<sup>131</sup> though of course there were exceptions to this. Further, it is through the dichotomies of male/female, strong/weak, coloniser/colonised, order/chaos that the powerful defined themselves: "...there [were] not only similarities but structural connections between the treatment of women and of non-Europeans in the language, experience, and imaginations of western men."<sup>132</sup> British manliness was not effeminate; it was not black; it was not colonised. It is not subtle, either, this sexualization of space, as the colonized land becomes feminine, too, inviting "penetration" by characters such as Allan Quatermain.<sup>133</sup> As such, the placement of a monument to Nelson in Bridgetown, Barbados was, like the Nelson Pillar in Dublin, not only a colonial, political action, but a gendered, raced and classed

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<sup>128</sup> From the inscription around the base of the monument.

<sup>129</sup> Catherine Hall, 205-254; Tosh, 13.

<sup>130</sup> Kelly Boyd. *Manliness and the Boys' Story Paper in Britain*. (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), pg. 125.

<sup>131</sup> Sara Mills. "Gender and Colonial Space." *Feminist Postcolonial Theory*. (New York: Routledge, 2003), 705-711.

<sup>132</sup> Joanna De Groot. "'Sex' and 'Race': the construction of language and image in the nineteenth century." *Sexuality and Subordination: Interdisciplinary studies of gender in the nineteenth century*. (New York: Routledge, 1989) pg 91.

<sup>133</sup> Joseph Bristow. *Empire Boys: Adventures in a Man's World*. (London: HarperCollinsAcademic, 1991), pg. 127-130.

action; it forced the parallel dichotomies of male/female, British/Other, strong/weak into the collective memory. Peter Hulme points out that colonial discourse, literally the words historically used in discussion of the different groups in a colonial situation, contain and exercise power in favour of the individual who defines and uses them.<sup>134</sup> In this case, the Nelson monument makes clear to the non-British Barbadians that as non-British, they held a different place in Barbados society. It was a monument glorifying the male colonisers, powerful over a multiplicity of others, and the meaning of the monument became extrapolated, essentialised and stronger for those colonisers throughout the nineteenth century. It bears noting that the colonized

Figure 4

Nelson's Column in  
Trafalgar Square, London

had a very different relationship to the monument than the colonisers: recall Jamaica Kincaid's relationship to the street she grew up on and the "maritime criminal" it was named for.<sup>135</sup>

Once a monument has been imbued with a meaning, it becomes symbolic of a solid past against which to measure an uncertain future and an unstable present.<sup>136</sup> In England, even after the dissolution of the Empire,<sup>137</sup> the English are very reluctant to let go of their Imperial monuments. Though the citizens of the cities of Dublin and Bridgetown have dealt with their Nelson monuments as they saw fit, the whole of Trafalgar Square in London (see figure 4) continues to be a monument to the Empire. As such, it can be read as a text.<sup>138</sup> It represents as a whole not the interests of the vast majority of the population of London or England, but continues to be a commemoration of the

<sup>134</sup> Myra Jehlen. "Response to Peter Hulme." *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 20, No. 1 (Autumn, 1993), pp. 187-191. pgs. 188-189.

<sup>135</sup> Kincaid, 24.

<sup>136</sup> Lowenthal, 5-6.

<sup>137</sup> There are, of course, remaining traces of the Empire even though all of the Imperial holdings except for some settler colonies have been legally returned to the inhabitants.

<sup>138</sup> Mace, *passim*.

ruling classes. It was never *for* the people.<sup>139</sup> Trafalgar Square's history extends back only to the nineteenth century (unlike other historic sites within London such as St. Paul's or the Tower) and it can be thought of as "a blank slab upon which Britain has inscribed its modern history."<sup>140</sup> The site holds no ancient or sacred significance, having been built on the Royal Mews,<sup>141</sup> and this history betrays the intent of the space. Charing Cross, the junction between the Strand, Whitehall and Pall Mall had been the "site for a continuing sparring match between the State and the people."<sup>142</sup> Previously Tyburn was identified as the preferred location for public punishment, and leading up to the 1820s when it was laid down as a public space and had changed hands from property of the crown to public property, it had been the site of "countless beheadings, hangings, drawings and quarterings."<sup>143</sup> Given this history, the rewriting of the space is quite a feat. As a *lieu de mémoire* that space was successfully altered from fearful of the crown's power (as an execution site) or distasteful but mostly harmless (as a Mews) by a complete renovation referencing more recent events that were highly politicized (the Battle of Trafalgar) and carefully orchestrated (Nelson's funeral).<sup>144</sup> There has never been anything neutral or passive about Trafalgar Square.

This is also underlined in the progress of Nelson's legend throughout the nineteenth century. Veneration of Nelson went in and out of fashion, and parallel to these fascinations with the naval hero, commemoration of his death was on and off a public activity. Immediately after his death there was an intense period of mourning manifested most obviously in the careful strategic organization of the funeral<sup>145</sup> and in the massive boom in manufactured objects of mourning.<sup>146</sup> Public adulation of

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<sup>139</sup> *Ibid*, at 134-149.

<sup>140</sup> Roger Hargreaves. *Trafalgar Square: Through the Camera*. (London: National Portrait Gallery, 2005), pg. 12.

<sup>141</sup> Mace, 25-31.

<sup>142</sup> Mace, 23.

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid*, at 24-25.

<sup>144</sup> Jenks, "Contesting the Hero," *passim*.

<sup>145</sup> Jenks, "Contesting the Hero," *passim*.

<sup>146</sup> See, for examples of this, John Lea's catalogue for the Lily Lambert McCarthy Collection at Portsmouth. [John Lea, Lieutenant Commander, RN. Remembering Nelson: A record of the Lily Lambert McCarthy Collection at the Royal Naval Museum, Portsmouth, England. (Portsmouth: Royal Naval Museum, 1995)]

Nelson waned somewhat between 1815<sup>147</sup> and 1839, when there was a second wave of memorabilia spurred on as publicity and fundraising for Nelson's Column.<sup>148</sup> While the column was being constructed, it was a target of *Punch* magazine, which frequently lampooned the problems that plagued the monument committee. It was only towards the end of the nineteenth century that Nelson regained his former role as symbol of greatness. This was due in part to the fact that at the end of the nineteenth century, England began to see a second naval race as technologies developed throughout European navies and its position as "ruler of the waves" began to be challenged.<sup>149</sup> By the centennial of the Battle of Trafalgar, he recovered his former symbolic position in collective memory.

It would be ludicrous to deny that the building of the Square was the result of a deliberate effort to create a significant space. The initial intention of the space is similarly undeniable: it was a reminder of the power that a particular group of people had. There is some speculation that construction began not as a simple monument to the battle but as a blatant illustration of the power of the aristocracy and the bourgeoisie over the able seamen who mutinied at the Nore and at Spithead in the previous years.<sup>150</sup> Into the later nineteenth century, it became a symbol of Britain's Imperial might.<sup>151</sup> However, what seems to be less obvious is that the Square continues to exercise a similar type of power.

Historically, there have been stringent rules applied to the use of the Square: children are not to paddle in the fountains; we are not to touch the statuary. Indeed, the fountains still contain the rather cryptic warning: *not safe for public use*, though prosecution of those who wish to climb on Edwin

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<sup>147</sup> Marianne Cziknik proposes that the wane in Nelson's popularity was caused by the publication of his letters to Lady Hamilton in 1814. (Cziknik, 141)

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid*, at 116-117.

<sup>149</sup> Archer Jones. *The Art of War in the Western World*. (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1987), pgs 425-427.

<sup>150</sup> Cziknik., 49-50.

<sup>151</sup> Mace, *passim*.

Landseer's lions is no longer common.<sup>152</sup> The Battle of Trafalgar was a significant event for the British people: it was the event that prevented Napoleon from invading England. However, Trafalgar Square has become a revered space in the same way as St. Paul's or St. Martin-in-the-Fields (located off to the side of the square) though with varying intent over the nearly two centuries it has been there; the committees responsible for the design of the space would be pleased with the lasting effects of their work. In addition to the possibility that the space and Nelson's Column in particular were a statement against the sailors that had mutinied, it was a symbolic illustration of power over the lower classes. In the 1840s, revolutions swept Europe and those in power in England were worried about their own people rising up to wrest control. This was summarily dealt with. Trafalgar Square was fortified by Wellington and troops in numbers that had last been seen during England's Civil War in the seventeenth century, and ownership of the Square was transferred back to the Queen in 1844, thus making any crime that occurred in the square a crime against the crown and therefore subject to more serious punishment.<sup>153</sup> Demonstrations in Trafalgar Square now no longer hold the same consequences as they did in the nineteenth century.<sup>154</sup> In some cases the space has developed a long-term association with a cause, such as the anti-apartheid movement in the 1970s that possibly chose the space because of the proximity to South Africa House.<sup>155</sup>

There have been actions to disrupt the Imperial narrative of the space with the inclusion of modern statuary on the long-empty fourth plinth,<sup>156</sup> originally intended to hold a statue of William IV before it became apparent that the cost of this was prohibitive.<sup>157</sup> However, the physical space of the square and the statuary within it are immovable. In 2000, Ken Livingstone, who was then Mayor

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<sup>152</sup> Hargreaves, 12-13.

<sup>153</sup> Mace, 130-177.

<sup>154</sup> For example, see Helen Barratt. "Students protest in London over loans. (News). (Brief Article)" *Student BMJ*. April 2002 p94(1), and Hargreaves, *passim*.

<sup>155</sup> Hargreaves, 87.

<sup>156</sup> See, for example David Ebony. "Quinn marble for Trafalgar Square." *Art in America*, Dec 2005 v93 i11 p37(1); and James Hall. Short of Statue. *Artforum International*. Nov 1999 v38 i3 p47.

<sup>157</sup> Mace, 111.

of London, attempted to remove the statues of Generals Napier and Havelock (which flank Nelson's Column) and replace them with statues more pertinent to the modern Londoner, stating that the vast majority of people moving through Trafalgar Square at any given time don't know who either are.<sup>158</sup> There were those who supported Livingstone's suggestion, pointing out that Havelock was best known for "subjugating the native peoples of a far-off land," and suggesting replacing him with Gandhi or another such figure.<sup>159</sup> There were also those who said they'd like to see the "beastly little tick [Livingstone] ... horsewhipped down the Strand,"<sup>160</sup> for suggesting that either General be removed from Trafalgar Square. However, regardless of the fervour that was raised on either side of the issue, Havelock and Napier continue to hold their positions on either side of the "Butcher of Naples,"<sup>161</sup> Horatio Nelson. Trafalgar Square remains a major tourist attraction, and though attempts have been made to disrupt the space and draw attention to the non-neutrality of the message,<sup>162</sup> it is thought of as nearing sacrilege to suggest altering it by removing some of the statues. It is, as Rodney Mace eloquently puts it, the "front room" of England.<sup>163</sup> As a *lieu de mémoire*, it evokes to Britons and tourists alike a mythologized glorious Imperial past, visually reinforcing association with Nelson and the Battle of Trafalgar at the forefront of that memory. Trafalgar Square is one of the most recognizable spaces in London, and Nelson's Column allows for the memory of the defeat of

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<sup>158</sup> Paul Kelso. "Mayor attacks generals in battle of Trafalgar Square." *The Guardian*, October 20, 2000. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/guardianpolitics/story/0,385414,00.html> (accessed April 7, 2007)

<sup>159</sup> Will Brandt, letter to the editor, *The Guardian*, October 21, 2000.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/letters/story/0,385810,00.html> (accessed April 7, 2007)

<sup>160</sup> Oliver Hulme, letter to the editor, *The Guardian*, October 21, 2000.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/letters/story/0,385810,00.html> (accessed April 7, 2007)

<sup>161</sup> Stella Tillyard, letter to the editor, *The Guardian*, October 21, 2000.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/letters/story/0,385810,00.html> (accessed April 7, 2007)

<sup>162</sup> The Square was originally designed with four plinths: the two holding statues of Napier and Havelock, another with George IV, and one that was supposed to hold William IV. Funds were lacking for the final statue, however, and so the plinth remained open for many years. (Mace, 111) In recent years, there have been a number of statues by contemporary artists placed on the plinth, including *Alison Lapper Pregnant*, which is a nude sculpture of the pregnant artist Alison Lapper, who was a Thalidomide baby herself. ("The Fourth Plinth Project," <http://www.fourthplinth.co.uk/>, [accessed April 7, 2007])

<sup>163</sup> Mace, 15.

Admiral Villeneuve off Cape Trafalgar in October 1805 and many subsequent assertions of British power over other groups to be perpetuated.

To further emphasize the meaning of Trafalgar Square and Nelson's Column, in 1940 the intention of the Nazi party was to take it:

There is no symbol of British Victory in the World War corresponding to the French monument near Compiègne .... On the other hand, since the battle of Trafalgar, the Nelson Column represents for England a symbol of British Naval might and world domination. It would be an impressive way of underlining the German Victory if the Nelson Column were to be transferred to Berlin.<sup>164</sup>

Though a German Victory in the Second World War would likely have had a great many other manifestations (such as language use, and political subjection) the Nazis felt that an effective way to emphasize this would be to re-assign a meaning to a site of memory. Nelson's Column, seen as apparently the most obvious symbol of British power, would continue to symbolize British power, but British power that had been undermined. Essentially, with this plan, the Nazi party intended to use the British *lieu de mémoire* against itself.

In the late twentieth century, the discussion of history and memory has led to an acknowledgement of the fallibility of written history and the impossibility of really finding a "Truth." David Lowenthal and others have pointed out that meanings created and reinforced over years and years of uncritical repetition become increasingly stable in the public's mind; the memory is fixed, literally "written in stone." The perception is that the past is a solid unchanging thing, and so relics of it give a sense of stability; in England, preservation of the monuments and the trappings of the nineteenth century fuel a nostalgia for Empire,<sup>165</sup> an affection for a fictitious glorious past that has been systematically dismantled. Ludmilla Jordanova calls this the "Brideshead phenomenon;"<sup>166</sup>

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<sup>164</sup> *Ibid*, at 17.

<sup>165</sup> Lowenthal, 5-6.

<sup>166</sup> Jordanova, 131.

Lowenthal labels it “imperial self-esteem.”<sup>167</sup> The sites of memory come to be relied on for that reason; the result is that the phenomenon “signals an eclipse of reason;”<sup>168</sup> and we become no longer critical of the faults of the past. Nelson is criticized, but his faults don’t seem to hold much weight: June Purvis writes that a woman would never have gotten away with his sexual behaviour, but concludes that “[w]e also love him because he was a bit of a lad.”<sup>169</sup> Significantly, his treatment of his wife and his comments such as implying that you must hate a Frenchman as you hate the devil<sup>170</sup> are whitewashed because of the overarching affection the nation has for him. In the present, the result of this translates as a reluctance to join the European Union<sup>171</sup> and hostility within the country to non-white British citizens.<sup>172</sup>

Trafalgar Square is one of the best examples of a *lieu de mémoire* and a “heritage” site. Its geographical location is one in which gendered constructions of the national imaginary can be played out. Monuments to Nelson were placed in Dublin and Bridgetown in order to emphasise British dominance there. As mentioned above, this is a gendered, classed and raced Imperial activity. The memorial landscape of Trafalgar Square also illustrates a colonial narrative, but at home. In the nineteenth century, it was to remind people that the dichotomies existed, especially since throughout the century, the square became home to the ultra-“manly” heroes of Empire, namely, Generals Havelock and Napier.<sup>173</sup>

This hegemonic masculinity has been reinforced as various celebrations have occurred in Trafalgar Square (such as the Trafalgar Centennial, or various events related to the World Wars) but

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<sup>167</sup> Lowenthal, 5-6.

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid*, at 3.

<sup>169</sup> Purvis, 27.

<sup>170</sup> Southey, 43-44.

<sup>171</sup> For a few examples of this, see David Lawday. “Let’s admit that Europe is better.” *New Statesman* (1996) 129.4480 (April 3, 2000): 13; Nick Cohen. “There is no point in escaping any more: Europe once offered a route to the good life for dowdy Brits. As we contemplate a referendum, perhaps that no longer applies, writes Nick Cohen.” *New Statesman* (1996) 134.4741 (May 23, 2005): 18(3); John Kampfner. “Second-class allies: in the ten countries that will soon accede, support for the EU has now given way to disillusion--not least because of new migration policies.” *New Statesman* (1996) 133.4684

<sup>172</sup> “The Importance of Being British.” *Time International* (June 11, 2001): 41.

<sup>173</sup> Mace, 48-68.



by the same token, it has been disrupted. In 1959, Paul Robeson spoke in the Square supporting the peace rally against nuclear armament,<sup>174</sup> and in 1971, the first Gay Liberation march moved from Hyde Park to Trafalgar Square, and beneath the Death of Nelson relief at the base of the Column, activists spoke out, and gay couples embraced publicly for the first time.<sup>175</sup> More recently, the Fourth Plinth project has included Mark Quinn's *Alison Lapper Pregnant* as a very specific disruption of the masculine, Imperial narrative, the strength of which has upset some.<sup>176</sup>

Nelson, as a *lieu de mémoire* and as represented in *lieux de mémoire* comes across very differently in the English city of Portsmouth. The context of Trafalgar Square in London and the Nelson Monument in Barbados relies on the existence of those monuments in those spaces. There are records of the relationship between those in power, the monuments and those subject to the power of the monuments. In a similar way, the Nelson Pillar in Dublin and now the Spire in Dublin mark a past.<sup>177</sup> The Pillar is a *lieu de mémoire* for the citizens of that city, and the Spire forever remembers what happened there and why it is not there anymore. As a sailor, Nelson spent a great deal of time in Portsmouth, the chief base for the Royal Navy from the end of the seventeenth century.<sup>178</sup> Nelson was made into a hero for a great many people throughout England in the 200+ years since his death, but most obviously, he was honoured within his profession. The current website for the Royal Navy reveres him: "Horatio Nelson is generally regarded as the greatest officer in the history of the Royal Navy .... The poet Byron referred to him as 'Britannia's God of War'."<sup>179</sup> There have been several

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<sup>174</sup> Hargreaves, 70.

<sup>175</sup> *Ibid*, at 88.

<sup>176</sup> Josie Appleton. "Where are today's heroes? Josie Appleton believes the Trafalgar Square fourth plinth project is wrong headed." *Spectator*. April 17, 2004 v294 i9167 p42(2), pg. 2.

<sup>177</sup> It should be pointed out that those responsible for the commission of the Dublin Spire attempted to create a monument to the future: "It has a meaning, the Spire, and I will tell you about it. It stands for us, the Irish, now..." [Alison Armstrong. "Scriptito ergo sum." (Book Review) *Irish Literary Supplement*. Fall 2004 v24 i1 p29(2)] "It (The Spire) is forward looking and aspirational, not retrospective and historic in intent." [Bill Corcoran, "Spire Beats Boru for title." *Evening Herald*, quoted on the "Spire of Dublin," <http://www.spireofdublin.com/>, (accessed July 23, 2007)]

<sup>178</sup> Graham Gendall Norton. "Portsmouth: Graham Gendall Norton introduces a city that has faced invasions and foreign adventures since Roman times." *History Today*, May 2006 v56 i5 p8(2), pgs. 8-9.

<sup>179</sup> "Naval Leaders: Viscount Nelson," Royal Navy. <http://www.royal-navy.mod.uk/server/show/nav.3878> (accessed July 18, 2007)

ships named HMS *Nelson*. It seems unsurprising, then, that a great deal of public attention would be paid to him in the city of Portsmouth.

Because of the context as a naval port, Nelson's presence in Portsmouth is manifested differently than in other cities. Nelson was, during his lifetime, regularly *in* Portsmouth, and so the landscape bears a trace of him in a way that the landscape of Barbados, for example, does not. He is represented in the obvious way – in statuary – but also in what is *no longer there* using an awareness of the spaces of Portsmouth and the layers of former functions of that space. The urban landscape of Portsmouth is a palimpsest: there is the space that Nelson himself moved through and there is an awareness of this space despite the ravages of the Second World War and the passage of time. Whereas statuary of Nelson in Barbados, Dublin and London represents the symbolic form of Nelson to recall his memory to a particular end, in Portsmouth, there are physical objects to recall him.<sup>180</sup>

Portsmouth, as a Naval base, was a target of bombing raids during the Second World War. On a single night, January 10<sup>th</sup> 1941, 171 people were killed and an estimated 3,000 homes were damaged.<sup>181</sup> In total, there were sixty-seven air raids, during which:

... a total of 1,320 high explosive bombs were dropped, 38,000 incendiaries and thirty-eight parachute mines .... Nine hundred and thirty civilians were killed, 1,216 admitted to hospital and 1,621 others injured.<sup>182</sup>

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<sup>180</sup> "Maritime Memorials" database. National Maritime Museum. <http://www.nmm.ac.uk/memorials/> (accessed July 30, 2007)

<sup>181</sup> Norton, 8.

<sup>182</sup> F. W. Lipscomb, *Heritage of Sea Power: The story of Portsmouth*. (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1967), pg, 221.

Very little of the old city remains and much was rebuilt in the 1950s and 1960s.<sup>183</sup> There was a presence of Nelson in Portsmouth before the Second World War, but the *lieu de mémoire* of Nelson was used after the Second World War to try to re-present the glorious past of the Navy and of Britain as a whole. In light of the postwar poverty<sup>184</sup> and the parallel decommissioning of much of the Royal Navy, it makes a great deal of sense that the British people would prefer to identify with a glorious past. Indeed, the Royal Navy figured in British national identity throughout the twentieth century.<sup>185</sup>

Figure 5:



Nelson Monument at Grand Parade, Portsmouth

There are several monuments in Portsmouth related to Nelson. The memorial obelisk, with a niche housing a bust of Nelson, was raised at Portsdown Hill in 1807 by men who had served at the Battle of Trafalgar.<sup>186</sup> The obelisk is a very conventional monument, similar in format to the Nelson Pillar and Nelson's Column, but the effect of it is diluted by the larger presence of Nelson in Portsmouth, the *trace* of Nelson. The original anchor of HMS *Victory* is placed on a platform along Clarence Esplanade over the spot where it was thought (in 1854) that Nelson left English soil for the last time. But, most interesting in a discussion of the manipulation the meaning of the image of Nelson (see figure 5) is a statue at Grand Parade that attempts to communicate as well as it can what the physical presence of Nelson might have been. This monument represents various layered

<sup>183</sup> John Slater, *Old Portsmouth, Conservation Area no 4: Guidelines for Conservation*. (Portsmouth: Portsmouth City Council, 2006), pg. 12.

<sup>184</sup> C. J. Bartlett. *A History of Postwar Britain, 1945-74*. (London: Longman, 1977), 24.

<sup>185</sup> Ralph Harrington. "The Mighty Hood": Navy, Empire, War at Sea and the British National Imagination, 1920-60," in *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 38, No. 2. (Apr., 2003), pp. 171-185.

<sup>186</sup> The inscription reads: "Consecrated to the memory of Viscount Lord Nelson. By the zealous attachment of all those who fought at Trafalgar to perpetuate his triumph and their regret 1805. Foundation stone laid July 1807" ["Maritime Memorials" database. National Maritime Museum. <http://www.nmm.ac.uk/memorials/> (accessed July 30, 2007)]

meanings, all embodied in the physical form of Lord Nelson. The primary meaning, obviously, is to recall Nelson, but it is weighted down with inscriptions explaining the multiple functions of the monument. The figure of Nelson stands atop a plinth, which in turn is placed on a platform with steps. On each side of the plinth, there is a plaque, on the stairs are carved phrases about Nelson, and there is another plaque with further information about the monument. They provide Nelson's death date, the prayer he wrote the night before the Battle of Trafalgar, the names of the sculptor and designer of the monument, and a note that the monument is placed directly over the spot where Nelson walked on his way from breakfast to the shore before he left for Cape Trafalgar. Much emphasised on this plaque is how in 1941, Portsmouth and HMS *Victory* suffered terrible damage at the hands of German bombers. On the steps is carved "Remember his glory," and "Here served Horatio Nelson/You who tread his footsteps/remember his glory." On the plaque set near the monument is an explanation of how Nelson is represented not as thin as he should be, because that would make him appear taller than he actually was. The monument at Grand Parade was moved to that location in preparation for the bicentennial of the Battle of Trafalgar, but it was constructed in 1951 and placed in Southsea Common overlooking the spot where Nelson left English soil before boarding the *Victory* the morning of September 14, 1805. As one of the plaques explains, it was moved to this spot because it was a more prominent and historically significant spot.

What is interesting is the emphasis on the Second World War. Nelson, clearly, was not part of this war, but he was presented as a model to imitate in conduct of war. The Second World War had its own significant officers, but they had not the benefit of the nineteenth-century biographical "hagiography"<sup>187</sup> that Nelson did. Judging from the text of the plaque on the eastern side of the plinth, in 1951, though they recognised Nelson's significance, what was most prominent in their minds was that their city (and by association their young men) had seen great sacrifice:

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<sup>187</sup> Harold Nicolson. *The Development of English Biography*. (London: The Hogarth Press, 1928), pgs. 109-131.

Horatio Viscount Nelson-KB  
 Duke of Bronte in Sicily  
 Vice-Admiral of the White  
 his last hours in England  
 before leaving for the Battle of  
 Trafalgar were spent at the  
 George Hotel, High St. Portsmouth  
 which hotel was destroyed with  
 a great part of Portsmouth in  
 a German air raid on this city  
 on January 10th-11th 1941  
 his remains were brought to  
 Spithead December 4th 1805 on  
 board H.M.S. Victory which ship  
 was badly damaged in the forefoot  
 by a bomb in a raid on the 10th March 1941

There is a parallel made here between Nelson's own sacrifice, and the sacrifice of the city of Portsmouth. His presence, imbued with this meaning correlates his legendary heroicness and the heroicness of their own city. It is far less painful to commemorate heroicness in death abstractly and symbolically, through events that happened 150 years in the past, than to think of the specific brother or father or son lost in the previous ten. It is a comfort to think of the fame and glory of Nelson and that the city had done the same. Also telling is the text of the prayer that Nelson wrote the night before the Battle, placed on the western side of the plinth:

May the great God whom  
 I worship grant to my country  
 and for the benefit of Europe in  
 general a great and glorious  
 victory and may no misconduct  
 in any one tarnish it-and may  
 humanity after victory be the  
 predominant feature in the  
 British fleet. For myself individually  
 I commit my life to him that made  
 me and may His blessing alight  
 on my endeavours for serving  
 my country faithfully. To him  
 I resign myself and the just cause  
 which it is entrusted to me  
 to defend.  
 Amen. Amen. Amen.

In the context of 1951, there is a parallel drawn between Nelson's hope for after the Battle of Trafalgar and the War that had just finished. The monument is anchored in the meanings provided by the plaques surrounding it; in 1951, it recalled the heroicism of the famous admiral and of the young men of the city of Portsmouth and elsewhere who had fought in the Second World War, and attempted to comfort those left behind by emphasising the nobility of their actions. That Nelson was small, and that they took careful precautions to make sure that this was communicated bespeaks of a further emphasis: though he was small and disabled in the line of duty, he was someone for young sailors to emulate ("you who tread in his footsteps, remember his glory"). It is a specific type of heroic masculinity; it is what the Victorians called manliness: behavioural rather than innate, physical or biological.

HMS *Victory* was Nelson's flagship at Trafalgar and the only man-of-war from Nelson's Navy to still exist. It had been destined for shipbreaking in 1831, and saved at the behest of the wife of Nelson's flag captain, Thomas Masterman Hardy.<sup>188</sup> Since this time, she was often under threat of destruction, and in 1928, after significant effort to raise funds to preserve her, she was opened to the public in dry dock by George V.<sup>189</sup> During World War II, she sustained damage as a bomb landed on her deck.<sup>190</sup> HMS *Victory* is now a tourist attraction, and though she has a history from before Nelson's time (Admiral Jervis, later Lord St. Vincent, for example, commanded in HMS *Victory* before Nelson<sup>191</sup>), she holds the trace mainly of Nelson and acts as a *lieu de mémoire* of the presence of Nelson. It was recognised that emphasising Portsmouth as an educational tourist attraction could offer a boost to the local economy and help in funding the preservation of historical objects, like the

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<sup>188</sup> Norton, 9.

<sup>189</sup> Lipscomb, 217. To spread out the meaning of the monumental relics of Nelson's career, the original anchor of the *Victory* is on display on a pedestal further down Clarence Esplanade. It was placed there, near where they thought he left England for the last time, in the 1850s with the misquotation: "England Expect Every Man To Do His Duty." It has since been discovered that the location is wrong.

<sup>190</sup> *Ibid*, at 222.

<sup>191</sup> David Davies. *A Brief History of Fighting Ships*. (London: Robinson, 2002), pg. 75.

*Victory*.<sup>192</sup> The deck bears a brass plate where Nelson fell after he received his fatal shot, and recently the former ban on photography aboard her has been lifted everywhere except for the place where it is thought that Nelson died. The importance of the *Victory* as a symbol to the Navy is further emphasised by the fact that when Admiralty House was bombed in April 1941, HMS *Victory*, an “emblem of victory”<sup>193</sup> became the home of the Admiralty and in that role, was the site of many command decisions made by Admiral Sir W. M. James.<sup>194</sup> Admiral James was particularly romantic about making decisions in the same rooms where Nelson made his decisions before Trafalgar.<sup>195</sup>

There are *lieux de mémoire* of Nelson, traces imprinted on the urban landscape of Portsmouth, that are, essentially, not there. This may seem like a paradox, but as with the Nelson Pillar in Dublin (albeit with a different impetus) what *was* there is emphasised. The street plan of Old Portsmouth, Conservation Area 4, has not changed significantly in several centuries,<sup>196</sup> so it is possible (and indeed encouraged of visitors) to follow the roads that Nelson took from the George Hotel on High Street, to the Inn where Nelson had breakfast, the morning of September 14, 1805, down to the sallyport, and to observe the space where he left England. There are plaques in the ground so that visitors do not get off track. The “Nelson Walk” encouraged by the tourist centre is not, however, limited to this last stroll, but follows a path around Portsmouth, pointing out where the architecture stylistically resembles what it might have looked like when Nelson was alive, where significant buildings from Nelson’s time would have been, and the gate (as the fortifications around the Old City were still there in 1805) that Nelson would have walked through into the city the week he left for Trafalgar, to name only a few examples. In some special cases, such as the former location of the George Hotel, where Nelson spent his last night in Portsmouth, the last portion of the building left standing by

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<sup>192</sup> John Bradbeer and Graham Moon. “The Defence Town in Crisis: The Paradox of the Tourism Strategy.” In *The Geography of Defence*, Michael Bateman and Raymond Riley, eds. (New Jersey: Barnes and Noble Books, 1987), pg. 96.

<sup>193</sup> Admiral Sir W. M. James. *The Durable Monument: Horatio Nelson*. (London: Longmans, Green and co., 1948), pg. 1.

<sup>194</sup> *Ibid*, at 1.

<sup>195</sup> *Ibid*, at 1.

<sup>196</sup> Slater, 8.

German bombs remains (an archway), and though some domestic structures have been built around the site, the main front area of where the George used to be is now a garden, with a plaque explaining the significance.

The memory of Nelson in Portsmouth can be best understood with a discussion of what Graham Dawson refers to as the “pleasure culture of war.”<sup>197</sup> The “pleasure culture” grew out of a series of necessities for the Imperial project: beginning with England’s Wars of Empire, war and militarism were essential for expansion. Duly, it became the task of those back home to reinforce this. Literature and imagery produced throughout this period emphasised that boys and young men could only grow up to be the men they thought they should be if they understood this and participated to some extent:

Certainly it was during the 1890s that militarism became most evident, but throughout the century the essentially aggressive nature of the British was reflected as a powerful theme within popular culture, a culture which legitimized war, romanticized battle and portrayed the warrior as a masculine ideal.<sup>198</sup>

Starting with Shakespeare’s Henry V, and his St. Crispin’s day speech, the British had long felt some sort of connection within their culture conflating Britishness with masculinity and warlikeness: “A ‘real man’ would henceforth be defined and recognized as one who was prepared to fight (and, if necessary, to sacrifice his life) for Queen, Country and Empire.”<sup>199</sup> Nelson fit the bill. Those involved in the First World War quickly became disenchanted with this as they saw battle, and in the 1920s war was denounced in popular culture,<sup>200</sup> but it emerged in boy culture again during the Second World War: as the side effect of the pleasure culture of war, England experienced a rise in juvenile delinquency.<sup>201</sup> Another noticeable aspect of the Second World War is that there was a blurring of the lines between civilians and combatants, and so this created an odd situation for the idea of

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<sup>197</sup> Dawson, *passim*.

<sup>198</sup> Michael Paris. *Warrior Nation: Images of War in British Popular Culture, 1850-2000*. (London: Reaktion Books, 2000), pg. 13.

<sup>199</sup> Dawson, 1.

<sup>200</sup> Paris, 148.

<sup>201</sup> *Ibid*, at 192.



“hero.”<sup>202</sup> Residents of Portsmouth would have felt this conflation with much immediacy as they experienced the air raids and the destruction of their city.

Placing the idea of the ever-presence of Nelson in Portsmouth, with an understanding of the kind of things expected of a fully masculine and manly young man, as well as the idea that the war had been part of the everyday for the people of Portsmouth, a clear correlation emerges. With the extensive explanation on the plaques surrounding the Nelson Monument, it becomes clear that war must be carried out only with great reluctance and that when duty is mentioned and you are called upon, irrespective of whether you are citizen or sailor, you must be willing to go regardless of what consequences you fear. The *lieux de mémoire* in Portsmouth and the *lieu de mémoire* that is Portsmouth the naval town carry this particular meaning throughout the space. Expectation hangs heavy.

With all of the monuments discussed, there is also a secondary *lieu de mémoire*, and that is the phrase or the word itself. There are various ways to access the collective memory of Nelson. Through the phrase “Nelson’s Column is in Trafalgar Square,” or the word “The Spire” within Dublin, the meaning of each of these is not limited to the actual site of the monument. Meanings may vary from person to person: a Canadian tourist who has visited London once may associate the phrase “Nelson’s Column” with their own visit. A Victorianist may recall the nineteenth-century class struggles enacted in Trafalgar Square. Descriptive phrases of each of the sites take each out of its location; the power of each follows those who understand them. As Paul Connerton writes of the recollection in France of the Revolution and the effect that this has, a phrase recalls an experience: “Did you see what we did to our Nelson Monument?” or “O’er Nelson’s tomb, with silent grief oppress’d/Britannia mourned her hero, now at rest.”<sup>203</sup> The Irish celebration is a stark contrast to the broadside lyrics published only a year after his death, possibly recalling the elaborate funeral and

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<sup>202</sup> *Ibid.*, at 200-204.

<sup>203</sup> “The Death of Nelson.” *A Garland of Songs* broadsheet, c. 1806.

burial of Nelson in St. Paul's. Both recall a physical *lieu de mémoire* and the loading of each of those monuments with specific meanings.

Monuments have a privileged position as communicating all that the committee responsible for their creation can say in the abbreviated form, but also a protection under the concept of "heritage." As a *lieu de mémoire* the meaning of the monument is heavily dictated to the collective memory of a group. Nelson was a prime candidate for public memorialisation as the British people emerged through the nineteenth century warrior-like and imperial. Public interests were invested in how the Empire grew, and in a century without any real threat of invasion by sea, thanks to Nelson, the Navy's primary task was escorting merchantmen from point to point around the globe. Throughout, and into the twentieth century, Nelson as a symbol was modified to create good Imperialists, keep the colonized people in place, and ensure that when war did arrive, that it was met with the best British spirit. In 1898, Rear-Admiral Lord Charles de la Poer Beresford wrote:

If we look for Nelson's true monument we shall find it in the British Empire of our day. The sovereignty of the seas which he won for us, and the prestige of Trafalgar, strong even now after the lapse of 90 years, made it possible and protected its development. We can best do him honour, and repay the immeasurable debt which we owe him, by remembering his teaching, by refusing to sacrifice duty to comfort, and by persistently strengthening the great force which he led to victory.<sup>204</sup>

Admiral James, in 1948, elaborated on the idea of a metaphysical monument when he bestowed a deeply abstract title on Nelson: "Nelson's sayings and doings are a durable monument,"<sup>205</sup> ... a monument un-erasable in the British memorial landscape.

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<sup>204</sup> Rear-Admiral Lord Charles William de la Poer Beresford. *Nelson and His Times*. (London: Printed by Eyre & Spottiswoode, Her Majesty's printers, published by Harmsworth brothers, Ltd., 1898.), pg. 232.

<sup>205</sup> James, 304.

## Chapter 2: The Hero in Bits and Pieces

In the nineteenth century it was possible for an individual to decorate a home as a shrine to Admiral Nelson. There was the Trafalgar Chintz with which to cover all of your furniture. There were tributary curtain ties. There was a damask pattern for table cloths created in honour of Nelson. Your bookshelves could be filled with serious biographies and casual illustrated volumes on the subject of Nelson and Trafalgar, and you could serve tea out of Nelson-themed ceramics. Nelson in the public memorial landscape is an obvious and pervasive visual and symbolic presence, but he crossed the threshold and became part of everyday life in the private sphere of people's homes, thus extending the sites of consumption for his memory. In the nineteenth century, Nelson became a commercial, all-pervasive commodity; he was perhaps the first individual to be made into what we would now recognize as a media celebrity. Biographies were published with accompanying images of Nelson creating a compelling visual imaginary for the reader. Nelson's portrait, the phrase "England Expects," the date of his death, and his name appeared on pottery and ceramics, boxes, framed prints and illustrations, even upholstery and handkerchiefs. Nelson's funeral has been likened to Princess Diana's in our own time,<sup>206</sup> but the parallel with a modern political celebrity does not begin and end there: Nelson's image, like Diana's, was posthumously *merchandised*. As such, he existed in the private space of nineteenth-century homes, and served as *lieux de mémoire* building upon and reinforcing the meanings bestowed upon Nelson in the public space.

Beginning with the funeral, the nineteenth century created multiple sites of remembrance of Nelson. Biographies consisted of anecdotes reinforcing his reputation as a hero. In visuals the essentialised character of Nelson was communicated in an equally essentialised way: his one arm was a signifier of who he was and what he represented. In simplest terms, he was easily recognizable

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<sup>206</sup> Lavery, 134.

(Joyce's "one-handed adulterer") and the attribute that made him so held its own additional meaning: he'd lost his arm at the Battle of Teneriffe; he lost his life at the Battle of Trafalgar. The *lieux de mémoire* of Nelson in the private space needed the signifier of his missing arm, because there were many variables that could not be identically and consistently reproduced on cheap merchandise. To illustrate, one can view the differences between images of him on contemporary glassware at the National Maritime Museum in Greenwich: Nelson was easily recognizable to most, in visual shorthand, as the Admiral with one arm.

One of the key effects of industrialisation was that people were able to acquire goods, manufactured with greater ease than in previous times. Nelson was one of a variety of subjects that were immortalised on cheaply made, mass-produced merchandise, but few other individuals had such an all-encompassing presence on this kind of product. Judging from the volume of remaining examples, there were two major periods in the nineteenth century during which production of commemorative ceramics and glassware reached a peak. The first of these was in the few years immediately after Nelson's death, and the second was in the 1840s, possibly related to the push at that time to raise funds and support for Nelson's Column in Trafalgar Square.<sup>207</sup> Alexandra Fullerlove, of the National Maritime Museum in Greenwich has said, in reference to the number of objects in the collection that allude to Nelson: "It's almost as though you couldn't sell something if it didn't have Nelson on it."<sup>208</sup> To support this, there are numerous examples that look suspiciously like Wellington or Rodney, but have been altered either with a label to indicate that they represent Nelson, or with an empty sleeve.

Private space was a secondary site of access to the memory of Nelson, and reflected the way that Nelson was understood and taught. The nineteenth-century British middle-class division

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<sup>207</sup> Czisnik, 122.

<sup>208</sup> Alexandra Fullerlove, Offsite Collections, the National Maritime Museum in Greenwich, London, England, in conversation, July 24, 2006.

between public and private space is one that has recently been contested. Throughout the twentieth century, scholars insisted on a nineteenth-century division between genders into separate spheres: the public space was masculine and the private space was the domain of women.<sup>209</sup> In the eighteenth century, work happened in the home, whereas industrialization in the next century moved work outside the home for most men. Women, in comparison, continued to work in the home.<sup>210</sup> More recently, scholars have contested this division as too simplistic and limited. According to John Tosh, men defined themselves in terms of their ability to raise suitably manly boys and create an environment where a boy could grow into an “adult, fully masculine person;” that is, men also defined themselves partially by their domestic situation.<sup>211</sup> Further, the line between the public and the private spheres was not only permeable, but as George Behlmer writes, deliberately breached by representatives from both in order to manipulate the private environment for the betterment of society.<sup>212</sup> Movement between public space and private space was possible. However, symbolic presences did not always have this much power. Nelson crossed the line, and as such in the private space, represents both the public’s affection for him, and a concerted marketing effort to place him in the domestic sphere. This was not the norm; military and naval heroes such as Wellington or Rodney simply did not get the same attention. Queen Victoria may have been represented in both private and public spaces, but Nelson’s movement into the private sphere predates her, to say nothing of the fact that he was not a member of the royal family and a younger son of a country parson.

As *lieux de mémoire* of Nelson, the meaning of domestic memorial objects hinges on a visual representation of him. As Stephen Bann discusses the use of illustration in books as contributing to a

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<sup>209</sup> Tosh, *passim*.

<sup>210</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>211</sup> *Ibid.*, at 3

<sup>212</sup> Ginger Frost. “Friends of the Family: The English Home and Its Guardians, 1850-1940.” (Review) *CLIO*. Summer 1999 v28 i4 p455.

“unified historical discourse,”<sup>213</sup> the type of image used in private *lieux de mémoire* would contribute to a unified symbolic understanding built *on* this existing discourse: Nelson, visually present as a one-armed Admiral, died at the Battle of Trafalgar defending England against Napoleon. By extension, “England expects that every man will do his duty” does not only apply to the sailors who were at Trafalgar, but, through repetition in different contexts, “England expects...” also addresses all those who saw or owned objects which in using the figure of Nelson articulate the nineteenth-century ideals of duty, sacrifice and manliness. To further emphasise, Marianne Czisnik has pointed out that by the end of the nineteenth century Nelson’s name was almost synonymous with British naval supremacy and would put the British viewer in mind of the identity of their nation.<sup>214</sup>

The meaning of objects within the private space depends heavily on the individual’s personal situation:

... meanings are produced through a complex relationship that involves at least two elements besides the image itself and its producer: 1) how viewers interpret or experience the image itself and its producer and 2) the context in which the image is seen.<sup>215</sup>

The meaning of Nelson’s image was generated at the crux of individuals’ personal experience within British society, the ideologies manufactured by the Navy, the Crown and society, and the manifestation of the object itself within the private sphere. The object would recall Nelson’s reputation, his monumental presence in the public space, and also the position of the viewer in society. It is impossible for the twenty-first century individual to definitively understand the contemporary context of a nineteenth-century object in the private space. However, this does not mean that analysis of the object in question does not shed *some* light on the nineteenth-century role of the image of Nelson, and an understanding of the pressures of that society in general. Nelson was

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<sup>213</sup> Bann, 43.

<sup>214</sup> Czisnik, 122.

<sup>215</sup> Marita Sturken and Lisa Cartwright. *Practices of Looking: an introduction to visual culture*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), pg. 45.

one of the first “celebrities” in our present understanding of that word, and his “merchandising” represents one of the first uses of consumerism to perpetuate a system of thought.

Not much has been written critically on ceramics and pottery in nineteenth-century England. The trend in histories has been toward specific collections and factories,<sup>216</sup> with little critical discussion. Older sources provide some insight, covering statistics of sale or naming places of production but most pertinent is discussion of techniques. Much early mass-produced English pottery and porcelain was decorated using transfer-printing<sup>217</sup> which led to greater speed of decoration and indirectly to a faster production of goods.<sup>218</sup> The potteries at Swansea, Staffordshire and Derby, among others who chose to represent Nelson, before this time relied on painters to decorate individual pieces<sup>219</sup> leading to easier identification of artists and sites of production but also to more expensive and exclusive pottery. Transfer printing made decorated ceramics affordable and consequently available to middle-class homes.<sup>220</sup>

Pottery is ephemeral, transient. As opposed to monuments, which usually require significant amounts of TNT or Semtex to be destroyed, domestic objects are breakable if someone is careless. The objects that remain intact from this time period likely would not have been used regularly.<sup>221</sup> The extant jugs commemorating Nelson, therefore, would have been present in households that were able to purchase non-functioning ceramics – wealthier middle class homes. They would have been decorative, and as such, likely on display. Their presence acted not only on the residents of the household, but, depending on their location within the house, they would also have acted on guests. If they had been displayed, this would have contributed visually to an understanding of Nelson as

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<sup>216</sup> Oliver Watson. “Find More Like This: English Pottery.” *Art History*, September 1992, Vol. 15 Issue 3, p396

<sup>217</sup> Geoffrey Bemrose. *Nineteenth Century English Pottery and Porcelain*. (London: Faber and Faber, 1952), pg. 23; Arthur Hayden. *Spode & His Successors*. (London: Cassell & Company Ltd., 1925) pg. 71.

<sup>218</sup> Bemrose, 23.

<sup>219</sup> Helen Hallesy, “Nelson Remembered.” *Minerva: The Journal of Swansea History*, Vol. XIII, 2005., *passim*, Bemrose, *passim*.

<sup>220</sup> Hayden, 72.

<sup>221</sup> Fullerlove, July 24, 2006.

well. Prominence of place would imply importance, and positioning within the home would have created a familiarity. It is another means through which the symbol of Nelson becomes part of the consciousness, and it is not unimportant that Nelson was not of the aristocracy: the overall message of the visual discourse of Nelson's life, funeral and subsequent immortalisation was that you, too, could be so revered. That this occurs on cheap goods purchased, kept, and possibly displayed by the middle classes indicates that it may have been subtle pressure from above to imitate him.

One such example is what we will call the Harris Jug.<sup>222</sup> (see figures 6, 7<sup>223</sup>) It is approximately 20 cm high, earthenware glazed in white, with transfer prints of a portrait of Nelson, a ship and two stanzas of verse:

Alas! Now mouldring into dust  
Brittannia's [*sic*] favourite Nelson lies  
May he inherit with the just  
An Endless portion of the skies

Matchless in Arms, too early slain  
The hostile nations hail'd his fall  
Whose valour crushed the power of Spain  
Whose thunder bent the haughty Gaul.

The transfers may have been done ahead of time and the commission only went as far as paying to have the words "James Harris/1806" painted on the front. The object, housed at the National Maritime Museum offsite storage facility, shares a shelf with several other nearly identical jugs. It was likely purchased for a household for which

Figure 6:



Diagram of two views of the Harris Jug from the NMM Collection

<sup>222</sup> "Jug (AAA4833)" National Maritime Museum Collections Database.  
<http://www.nmm.ac.uk/collections/explore/object.cfm?ID=AAA4833> (accessed May 27, 2008.)

<sup>223</sup> Several of the images for this chapter and the next are diagrammatic renderings of the originals. This is because copyright permission for these could not be gained in time for the submission deadline of the thesis.



expensive porcelain would have been too dear; standard practice in these cases was to purchase white-glazed cheaper pottery, likely made in Wales.<sup>224</sup> The Jug was likely kept on display: two centuries of regular use and handling would have worn down the glazes. There is slight wearing of the decoration on the handle, but the most damage is a chip around the lip.

To his peers, the subtext would have been that James Harris cared enough about Nelson's sacrifice to purchase it and that Nelson should be mourned. Further, Harris was able to purchase non-functioning pottery, and therefore was doing rather well. The jug, relying on an iconographic, simplified, symbolic image, acts as a private site of participation in public commemoration. James Harris did not go out on a limb and commission something large and expensive, he did not even commission a one-of-a-kind commemorative object, and he was only one of many who chose to pay their respects through the burgeoning ideology of consumerism. Objects like the Harris Jug had a greater presence in the every day life of an individual than a monument or a historical painting: a boy (or girl) living in a Victorian suburb of London would not see Nelson's Column, or Flaxman's Nelson monument in St. Paul's, every week, but either would, perhaps, see a jug in a Welsh dresser numerous times daily. The representation that would likely have the greater impact, then, is the less subtle, mass-produced one: the one that stood on the shelf in the hall between the drawing room and the dining room.

It is not the imagery alone that creates meaning here. The two stanzas of poetry on the side of the jug, though similar to others, appear only once in the National Maritime Museum's collection. They emphasise Nelson's death: each

Figure 7:

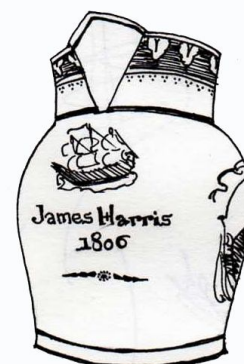


Diagram of front of Harris Jug  
from the NMM Collection

<sup>224</sup> Bemrose, 3.

stanza recalls Nelson's sacrifice but the first in relation to his eternal reward and the second in relation to how and why it happened and what was gained for the nation because of it. We must first learn that it was for Nelson's benefit that this happened: it gained him entry into heaven. We are then told why the individual reading the poem should care about the sacrifice. For the information of the masses that purchased this sort of commemorative object, valour, strength and skill, and a noble, premature death are the way into Brittannia's [*sic*] heart.

One side of the jug portrays Nelson looking off into the middle distance, the empty sleeve of his Admiral's uniform is pinned just below a medal, and another medal is pinned to his breast. In the background, there are ships (the sphere of Nelson's success) and the medallion that holds his image is flanked by the means (cannons) and reason (Union flag symbolising England) for his action. He is framed by "Nile," "Trafalgar," and "England expects that every man will do his duty" on banners, underscored by "Victory." Just as a religious icon would be framed and flanked by symbols of their canonisation or martyrdom, Nelson is represented foremost in a symbolic space with what made him what he was.

Nelson is represented *alive*, despite the fact that the verse on the opposite side both rejoices in what was gained by Nelson's death, and mourns him, and that "Trafalgar" is written immediately beside his portrait. He *is* dead, we are given to understand, but we needn't have to look at that. The two verses create a context for the image, so that that image becomes a visual *lieu de mémoire* for the meaning presented by the words; Nelson becomes a *lieu de mémoire* for the ideas of duty and a willingness to die for King or Queen and Country though without the sting of an actual sacrifice. In oil paintings, Nelson is often shown as fallen, in his final moments, but here, the death itself is not represented visually, it is displaced into a verse discussing his sacrifice and a representative image of Nelson as an Admiral.

One of the primary ways in which masculinity was portrayed in Victorian art is, predictably, through the image of the popular military hero.<sup>225</sup> As the nineteenth century was bookended by major military actions (Trafalgar/Napoleonic Wars at the front end and World War I at the other), to say nothing of the Crimea or the Boer War, there was an overarching preoccupation with the military, manifested in Graham Dawson's "pleasure culture of war."<sup>226</sup> In the wake of 1789, the British mobilised troops in an unprecedented way,<sup>227</sup> and the militarization of the nation redefined masculinity to a *much* more aggressive and warlike one.<sup>228</sup> What kept this ideology alive until the next great naval confrontation, despite the lack of naval battles in the nineteenth century, were the popular representations of naval and military heroes.<sup>229</sup> This was done in the form of history paintings, but what made it foremost in the middle class consciousness was the near constant presence of this kind of imagery in every day life. Specifically, the image on the Harris Jug of Nelson was likely based on another image – perhaps William Beechey's portrait or one of the many by Francis Lemuel Abbott – but the greater impact on an individual would be through the reproduction of that image on pottery or in books:

Popular art was thus instrumental in defining the public image of warfare in Victorian Britain [especially through] popularised reproductions [in which could] be found all the qualities – hero worship, sensational glory, adventure and the sporting spirit [through which] the age of imperialism saw itself.<sup>230</sup>

As mentioned above, throughout the nineteenth century, Nelson became more and more associated with Britain's imperial destiny. This is partially because of the lack of equal opposition on the seas: there wasn't a threat of invasion, so the famously warlike nation focussed their efforts towards

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<sup>225</sup> Joseph A Kestner. *Masculinities in Victorian Painting*. (Aldershot, Hants, England: Scolar Press, 1995), pgs 189-221.

<sup>226</sup> Dawson, *passim*.

<sup>227</sup> Stefan Dudink and Karen Hagemann. "Masculinity in politics and war in the age of democratic revolutions, 1750-1850," in John Tosh, Stefan Dudink and Karen Hagemann, eds. *Masculinities in politics and war: gendering modern history*. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), pg. 14.

<sup>228</sup> John Horne, "Masculinity in politics and war in the age of nation-states and world wars, 1850-1950," in Tosh, Dudink and Hagemann, 22-40, 27-28.

<sup>229</sup> Kestner, 221.

<sup>230</sup> Kestner, 221.

territorial expansion. What emerges is a conflation of masculinity/war/imperialism, concepts for which Nelson and his ultimate sacrifice can be made symbols.

It seems a paradox that warlikeness, aggression and secular martyrdom should have such strength in an innocuous domestic object such as a jug. In 1806, as the nation was mourning Nelson, domestic objects were foretelling a century in which the middle classes would move from working for the most part in the home, to congregate in the larger centres and work in factories. The first wave of domestic commemorative objects represents the beginning of this process, but by the 1840s, during the second wave of domestic Nelson memorabilia, this was in full swing. As discussed above, though some theorists throughout the twentieth century drew a rigid line between the public and the private spheres, recent scholarship by John Tosh and George Behlmer underlines the fundamental *connection* between the two.<sup>231</sup> Objects like the Harris Jug continued to have a presence throughout the century, and the odd partnership between domestic pottery and naval battles inspired within the home support of the imperial project.

As implied above, the Harris Jug does not exist in a time vacuum of 1806. Throughout the nineteenth century and possibly into the twentieth, the jug, and objects like it, continued to present meaning to domestic audiences, with a possible increase in significance as age granted it heirloom status. Though the Royal Navy did not experience a battle on the relative scales of the Battle of Trafalgar or the First World War between 1805 and 1914, it continued to have a high public profile.<sup>232</sup> As the nineteenth century became preoccupied with Empire, Nelson became an Imperial Hero as well as a national naval hero despite the fact that during his lifetime he was predominantly preoccupied with defeating the French Navy and Napoleon. Writing in 1930, Sellar and Yeatman's *1066 And All That* is an indicator of Nelson's secular canonisation, and the force of his image as a visual *lieu de mémoire*:

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<sup>231</sup> Tosh, *passim*; Frost, 455.

<sup>232</sup> Czigisnik, 122.

Napoleon ought never to be confused with Nelson, in spite of their hats being so alike; they can most easily be distinguished from one another by the fact that Nelson always stood with his arm *like this*, while Napoleon always stood with his arms *like that*.<sup>233</sup>

This paragraph is clearly meant to arouse a visual memory, built on, at the time of publication, more than a century of visual reinforcement of the one-armed Admiral. Sellar and Yeatman write in the introduction: "this is the only Memorable History of England, because all the History you can remember is in this book, which is the result of years of research in golf-clubs, gun-rooms, green-rooms, etc."<sup>234</sup> The implication is that this is a dip into the national imaginary, particularly that of the young men in England. It is done for comic effect, but there is more than a grain of truth in it as well.

The National Maritime Museum in Greenwich has a large collection of patchboxes, also referred to as Bilston enamel boxes<sup>235</sup> after the area (Bilston) near Birmingham where the majority of them were made. The sheer number still in existence is an indicator of the scale upon which they were produced. The boxes in the collection date primarily from the early part of the nineteenth century, though patchboxes were produced after this time (there are some in the collection dated to around the centennial of the Battle of Trafalgar). Barbara Tomlinson, the curator in charge of on-site storage at the National Maritime Museum, explains that the term "patchbox" is left over from the 18<sup>th</sup> century fashion of wearing patches on the face. The boxes are assumed to have been originally created as storage for these and after the fashion died out, continued to be produced.<sup>236</sup> However, there is some doubt as to whether they were indeed used for the storage of face patches.<sup>237</sup> Presumably, they were used as storage for other things if not patches for the face, as similar boxes in

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<sup>233</sup> Sellar and Yeatman, 97.

<sup>234</sup> *Ibid*, at 5.

<sup>235</sup> Lea, 123-126.

<sup>236</sup> Barbara Tomlinson, of the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London, England, in conversation July 21, 2006.

<sup>237</sup> "Patch box (OBJ0027)" National Maritime Museum Collections Database.

<http://www.nmm.ac.uk/collections/nelson/viewObject.cfm?ID=OBJ0027> (accessed August 20, 2007)

the Lily Lambert McCarthy Collection at the Royal Naval Museum in Portsmouth are described as Bilston enamel and copper snuff boxes.<sup>238</sup>

Some of the earliest examples of these boxes date from the 1740s, when a group of French enamellers settled in Staffordshire,<sup>239</sup> though they hit their fashionable peak in the 1780s, when they began to be produced to specifically commemorate contemporary famous individuals like Nelson.<sup>240</sup> The novelty of the detailed little decorations was popular with the English, but by the time Nelson started being represented at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the quality of the work had begun to wane.<sup>241</sup> This was partially due to the advent of transfer-printing, which allowed a greater number to be made in a shorter period of time and with less cost.<sup>242</sup> As a result, they began to be seen as merely low-quality knick-knacks,<sup>243</sup> and possibly were more accessible for purchase by the middle classes than before. They came to be included under the umbrella term “brum” meaning inexpensive or low-quality souvenir knick-knacks, interestingly derived from the contemporary slang name for Birmingham where they began to be mainly produced.<sup>244</sup>

The ephemera, these mass-produced objects, are only a part of a larger memorial effort, but unlike the Nelson monuments, represent an individual choice made in the face of public pressure – the earliest stages of what has come to be known as consumerism. The owners of the means of production are those with the power to spread ideologies through what is produced.<sup>245</sup> And these ephemera are among the earliest examples of commodity culture. Modern analysis of this is primarily done from a Marxist perspective<sup>246</sup> and, appropriately, it is the culture that created the “brum” that

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<sup>238</sup> Lea, 125.

<sup>239</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>240</sup> “Patch box (OBJ0027)” National Maritime Museum Collections Database.  
<http://www.nmm.ac.uk/collections/nelson/viewObject.cfm?ID=OBJ0027> (accessed August 20, 2007)

<sup>241</sup> Lea, 125.

<sup>242</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>243</sup> Barbara Tomlinson, July 21, 2006.

<sup>244</sup> Barbara Tomlinson, July 21, 2006.

<sup>245</sup> Sturken and Cartwright, pg. 166.

<sup>246</sup> *Ibid.* at 199.

also spurred Marx's theories on means of production and consumption. As numerous theorists have pointed out, consumer culture and advertisements are not selling the objects themselves, but rather the lifestyle that the objects become symbols for.<sup>247</sup> The Frankfurt School claims, too, that control is exercised on the working classes through this mass-production, as consumption becomes a "depoliticising" action.<sup>248</sup> The image of Nelson in this context could almost be described as a "brand": purchase of an object with Nelson's image on it would signify an important part of the identity of the purchaser beyond the possession of the object alone.<sup>249</sup>

Representations of Nelson on the lids of these boxes vary the widest of any other body of images, possibly in turn representing a wider variety of consumers. Some patchboxes display a portrait of Admiral Nelson, using his empty sleeve as a signifier. Some use a fictional unnamed monument to signify the death of Nelson. Some attempt to recreate an image of the Death of Nelson as the artist saw appropriate, showing Nelson collapsing against Hardy on the deck of the *Victory*. Others show sailors weeping, some show Britannia weeping, some merely display a few words of verse, such as: "Nelson, his King and Country's pride, Who in the Blaze of Glory died." Some are reminiscent of Wedgwood portrait medallions.<sup>250</sup> In general, they represent basic, raw images of Nelson. Unlike the monuments, there was no official dictation of what was to be portrayed, and unlike the jugs they were very small and quickly produced.

Figure 6:



Diagram of Patchbox in the NMM Collection, Greenwich

<sup>247</sup> *Ibid.*, at 198.

<sup>248</sup> John Storey. *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed.. (Essex: Prentice Hall Pearson, 2006), pg. 55.

<sup>249</sup> Sturken and Cartwright, 227-229.

<sup>250</sup> Wedgwood did in fact produce portrait medallions of Nelson and other naval figures, but these were of a slightly later date, c. 1925. [Lea, 104, 178.]

Each one of the designs used on the boxes presents a particular set of ideas: there are common themes and common images on the lids. There are a larger number of boxes than jugs, possibly because they are less fragile, but also possibly because there were more made. Some are nearly identical because they are transfer-printed, others are hand-painted using similar motifs; each is significant in its own way. It would be impossible to discuss all of them, and similarly impossible to identify one as *the most* significant, so one was chosen for discussion based on the variables and constants in imagery between it and the Harris Jug and because it was clearly created after the death of Nelson. The box, decorated with enamel paint, is similar in size and shape to most other patch boxes: an oval lid attached with a hinge to a metal base, approximately six centimetres by four and a half centimetres, and two to three centimetres high. (see figure 6) It depicts two figures sitting at the base of a funeral monument to Nelson. One of the two figures is mourning Britannia and the other is an angel. The monument looks much like Nelson's tomb in St. Paul's in London, although it has been placed somewhere outdoors so that it is in sight of the ocean. The focus of the image seems to be not the monument, but those left behind, and it appears that the viewer has happened upon a scene where Britannia mourns, but an angel has been sent to reassure her that Nelson has moved on to greater things. The angel carries a sign: "Nelsons removed to the Armies above." There is, apparently, some military heaven to which Nelson has been accepted.

Beginning in Georgian England, and continuing as a result of the Industrial Revolution, people began acquiring *things*, small objects to display. For example, purchase of small, functionless, or limited-function objects commemorating Nelson would communicate support for the emerging imperial effort, a support of the military superiority and protection of England and the statement: "I can afford to do this," just as this statement was made through the Harris Jug. Different modern sources suggest different users of these boxes, and necessarily different meanings in different contexts. It is difficult, with few contemporary sources on the usage and household appearance of



these boxes, to definitely determine how they might have functioned on the viewers. If a patchbox were on display in the home, it would function similarly to the Harris Jug: it would conflate Nelson's death in battle with masculinity and sacrifice towards the national imperial project, with a certain reverence and fond remembrance. The meaning would also depend on the room in which it was displayed, and would vary as time went on. If it was used as a snuff-box, it would carry an obviously higher impact on gentlemen than ladies, but if it were used to store jewellery, or a lock of some loved one's hair on a lady's dressing table, the effect would be different again. To illustrate with our specific example, Britannia mourning at a fictional tomb to Nelson: a lady might identify with Britannia mourning, having lost a male relative in battle, or, simply identify with the figure because it was a dominant archetype. A gentleman might feel pressure to act as Nelson did, noting the potential for adoration from both women and the nation.

The most obvious information imparted from the image is that Nelson is dead, and by extension, that Britannia is, in fact, sitting despondent at Nelson's tomb. It is not a literal representation of any actual, possible events. The figures represented are not actual living people, but an allegorical figure and a metaphysical one. They are not sitting somewhere in a real England, but rather in an imagined ideal England where Nelson can be in close proximity to the sea for all eternity. A basic assumption of the image is that Britannia, and by symbolic extension, Britain as a whole, *is* mourning the death of Nelson. It takes as its jumping-off point that we *should be* upset, but also that we should find comfort because Nelson has moved on to greater things. The image does not show us Nelson or Nelson's actions, but what we notice above all is the lack of Nelson and the reason he is no more. What Nelson *did* is important, but not uniformly so; most of his lifetime is forgotten while his personal sacrifice is identified as most significant. Another basic assumption of the image is that Nelson did God's will, and therefore will achieve his eternal reward as part of this bizarre military heaven, the Armies above. As the object speaks to those left behind, the key message

is that Nelson *died*, Britain *mourns*, Nelson is rewarded, Britain *should be* grateful. All happened for the best possible outcome.

As has been extensively shown in this thesis, the nineteenth-century's push towards military success and Empire building created a "pleasure culture" of war<sup>251</sup> that extended into the private sphere. Though Nelson was an actual person, who actually died in horrible conditions and actually killed people, his significance is wrapped up in a small image on a box, glorifying his sacrifice and tidying up what actually happened. This image bears no traces of the fact that minutes before Nelson himself was shot he witnessed a close friend obliterated by a cannon ball whose blood remains on most of Nelson's clothing to this day,<sup>252</sup> or of the reality that he was paralysed by the shot that severed his spine, and likely unable to control his bodily functions as a result, dying in a pool of his own urine.<sup>253</sup> The pleasure culture of war grew throughout the nineteenth century because of images such as this one, whipping up popular martial attitudes into a caricature of the medieval idea of chivalry.<sup>254</sup> Admittedly, few images depict the reality of Nelson's death – even *Death of Nelson* paintings set in the cockpit of the *Victory* where he died are idealised – but the absolute sanitization of this image removes all but sentiment left after Nelson's death. Cleaning up the image like this makes the prospect that much more attractive for others who would follow in Nelson's footsteps, or pressure their loved ones to do so. Functioning, then, as a *lieu de mémoire* of masculinity, the image on this box and the box as a whole emphasise the glory of the sacrifice, and downplay the gruesome actuality of death in war. Without representing any separate part of the events that led to Nelson's secular canonisation, the image makes us think of his willingness to die for king and country.

Images in biographies become loaded with meaning beyond a mere illustration of events, and as *lieux de mémoire* can be decoded as part of the postmodern "text" that includes the written narrative

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<sup>251</sup> Dawson, *passim*.

<sup>252</sup> Adam Nicolson. *Seize the Fire*, 254.

<sup>253</sup> *Ibid*, at 264.

<sup>254</sup> Paris, 23.

of the book, the choice and placement of the images in relation to the written narrative and the book as a whole. Only anecdotal evidence remains documenting the conscious effects that illustration had on the readers of illustrated books. Patricia Anderson has attempted to determine through extant documentation such as diaries and letters, just how much the illustrations mattered to the readers.<sup>255</sup> Illustrated books were a valuable possession to the middle-class families who owned them and the illustrations created a “visual vernacular” for the reader,<sup>256</sup> or a series of symbolic representations of figures from a narrative text that ground the concepts represented visually. This idea of the “visual vernacular” in the context of illustrations of Nelson would function the same way as Pierre Nora’s concept of *lieu de mémoire*. Nelson is represented, relying on his lack of arm as signifier, recalling the character of Nelson that British citizens at that time would be familiar with. From here, the meaning of his sacrifice would be produced.

The image in a book is heavily loaded and tied to the meaning of the text with which it is paired. When images are placed in a book, they act differently than those that might be viewed on a daily basis without textual description; illustrations of the events of Nelson’s life in T. O. Churchill’s *Life of Nelson* carry not only the visual clues within the image, but also grant importance to the specific events discussed in the text. The power of the image is exercised over the reader and helps to shape the reader’s understanding of the important events of Nelson’s life. Recent work on illustration has suggested that the traditional view that illustration is simply a tool to “realize specific aspects of the text,”<sup>257</sup> is too limited an explanation for the relationship between text and image.<sup>258</sup> In books that are extensively illustrated, the image is another means through which the reader is guided

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<sup>255</sup> Patricia Anderson. *The Printed Image and the Transformation of Popular Culture: 1790-1860*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), *passim*.

<sup>256</sup> *Ibid*, at 21.

<sup>257</sup> Peter W. Sinnema. *Dynamics of the Pictured Page*. (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998), pg. 2.

<sup>258</sup> *Ibid*, at 2.

to understand and interpret the subject matter. More than this, the images create a separate narrative of their own.

Nelson was a favourite subject of biography in the nineteenth century.<sup>259</sup> Biography at that time was concerned mainly with the impact of great individuals on the flow of history.<sup>260</sup> It became a means by which readers could better themselves through emulation,<sup>261</sup> and was differentiated from the growing academic study of history because, while an historian has a duty to their readers to tell the truth, with subject matter like that of biography there is an equal pressure to “censor”<sup>262</sup> some information.<sup>263</sup> For example, many nineteenth-century biographies of Nelson like to omit mention of Lady Hamilton, except where absolutely necessary.<sup>264</sup> There was also concern for the “dignity” of subject matter,<sup>265</sup> more specifically, whether it was an “elevated” topic, suitable for discussion. How Nelson was understood from textual sources was limited by what was deemed appropriate to divulge, but also what was thought to be edifying.

One of the most difficult aspects of analysing objects-as-texts from an historical time period is that the physical objects which remain do not necessarily reflect the full extent of what was produced. This has already been addressed in terms of accidental breakage, but the images and the text used for analysis here are actually from different books: the copy of T. O. Churchill's *Life of Nelson* in the University of Saskatchewan collection has been stripped of its plates at some point in its two-century lifetime. To deal with this, the illustrations from the copy in the National Art Library at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London will be used in this discussion.<sup>266</sup> Churchill's *Life*

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<sup>259</sup> Joseph W. Reed Jr. *English Biography in the Early Nineteenth Century*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966), pg. 23.

<sup>260</sup> *Ibid*, at 15-16.

<sup>261</sup> Elinor S. Shaffer. “Shaping Victorian Biography: From Anecdote to *Bildungsroman*,” in *Mapping Lives: The Uses of Biography*. Ed. Peter France and William St Clair. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002) pg. 116.

<sup>262</sup> James Field Stanfield, quoted in Shaffer, 116.

<sup>263</sup> *Ibid*, at 116.

<sup>264</sup> Czisnik, 82-83.

<sup>265</sup> Reed, 39.

<sup>266</sup> Additionally, because of copyright, diagram drawings based on the plates are inserted into the text here rather than images of the originals.

represents part of the first push of biography of Nelson, and therefore has been chosen because of a similar emotional and historical context to the objects already discussed. The book is in a format that would be now called a “coffee-table book;” it is 38 cm by 30 cm, with fifteen engravings of events discussed in the text inserted at regular intervals. The images, which are copyright 1808 to the publisher, R. Bowyer, (two years before the book itself) were a major recommendation at the time of printing. The full title is *The Life of Lord Viscount Nelson, Duke of Bronte, &c., by T. O. Churchill. Illustrated by Engravings of it's most Striking and Memorable Incidents*, though it should be noted that the text does not place the same significance on some of the events that the images do. Despite the importance of the images, also, it does not seem that the engraver was given as much attention as the author or the publisher: the name Bromley appears in the lower left-hand corner of each image, and once in the text.

Rather than acting as merely a manifestation of the information provided by the text, Churchill's engravings communicate a narrative of their own. This is particularly interesting because their communication of the events of Nelson's life through illustrations widens the audience that the narrative can be consumed by. Patricia Anderson's study, though she is discussing illustrated Bibles, lends some weight to this argument:

For Cooper [a man who was young in the first three decades of the nineteenth century] and his family it was an apparent source of great pride that his father had managed to purchase an engraved bible. He remembered how 'on rainy Sundays' his mother would unwrap this 'treasure' from 'it's careful cover'; and then young Carter [another young man of that era], feeling 'privileged', would 'gaze and admire while she slowly turned over that superb store of pictures'.<sup>267</sup>

It was deemed a point of pride among the middle classes to own an illustrated book. Though it is unlikely that Churchill's *Life of Nelson* would have held the same privilege of place in a home as a Bible would, this passage indicates that illustration in books at this time excited a certain amount of

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<sup>267</sup> Anderson, 33.

pleasure. In another passage, Anderson recounts a young man's recollection from his childhood about a book, referencing it entirely in terms of the images' explanation of events.<sup>268</sup>

The copy of Churchill's *Life* in the University of Saskatchewan collection was likely not stripped of its plates as an act of vandalism; the book does not bear any other traces of violence. Instead the plates might have been removed for aesthetic reasons: perhaps to display them. They could also have been sold separately as framed prints: they were carefully cut from the binding. This, of course, changes the context in which they would be viewed. Though we cannot know why they were removed from the book, or even when this occurred (the book came into the collection in 1924, according to the book plate on the inside cover) the fact that they were removed implies a certain value placed on the images above the book as a whole. If they were displayed, or even if they were kept in a file for regular viewing, they represent a certain emotional attachment (or commercial value) to the images beyond their context in the book. This could have been built on the reputation of Nelson throughout the nineteenth century, or, perhaps, even an immediate affection for the imagery, depending on when it occurred. It also means that the images are the stronger *lieu de mémoire* of the life of Nelson than the text or the two in conjunction. It has already been discussed how important illustration was to certain people in the nineteenth century, the current condition of the specific copy of Churchill's *Life* implies the extreme response.

The images in Churchill's *Life* recount as many of the iconic events of Nelson's life as possible: boarding parties, enemies surrendering, and of course his death at the Battle of Trafalgar. In the preface, the author makes certain to tell us how much effort was made to produce the most accurate life of Nelson yet, and that Mr. Bromley, the artist, made the trip to see HMS *Victory* in order to make the illustrations, thus communicating to the reader the important role that the images

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<sup>268</sup> *Ibid*, 31.

must play in their understanding of the historical events recounted in the text.<sup>269</sup> The text pays little attention to either Nelson's wife, Fanny, or his lover, Emma, and is written in one long narrative. It could be read in one sitting, as it is a relatively short book, with large, widely-spaced print. Most attention is paid to Nelson's military prowess, though a disproportionate amount is given to his death and a gruesome description of his autopsy. From the text, it can be determined that the reader is supposed to be British, as the "we won" approach is used throughout. It includes images intended to portray events related in the text, and reflect also the bias towards Nelson's military accomplishment. There is a portrait of Nelson facing the title page, and an image of a letter from Nelson following the preface. Of the fifteen images, three show his funeral and coffin and nine are battle-scenes.

An overarching theme of the images in Churchill's *Life* is Nelson wounded and killed in the line of duty. Timothy Jenks has identified certain aspects of Nelson's life that were often emphasised: "The filial origins of Nelson's religious piety, his modest social origins, the progressive wounding of his body ... and his country's recognition of his services."<sup>270</sup> The images in Churchill's *Life of Nelson* play a large part in the emphasis on Nelson's injuries, as the text does not place the same importance on these. Images of Nelson injured are placed between images of him in action, granting a plot structure of their own: Nelson is brave, Nelson is injured, Nelson's courage does not flag, Nelson dies and is mourned. The complete list of the plates, from the "Directions to the Binder for placing the plates" notation on the penultimate page is:

Head of Lord NELSON to face the Title-page.  
 Fac-simile of a Copy of a Letter from his Lordship to follow the Preface.  
 Pursuit of the Bear to face page [...] 7  
 Boarding the American [...] 9  
 Storming a Post at San Juan [...] 11  
 Loss of his Eye before Calvi [...] 19  
 Boarding the San Nicolas [...] 28

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<sup>269</sup> Churchill, i-vi.

<sup>270</sup> Jenks, *Naval Engagements*, 250.

Boarding the San Josef [...] 29  
 Encounter off Cadiz [...] 31  
 Affair of Teneriffe [...] 32  
 Battle of the Nile [...] 46  
 Battle of Trafalgar [...] 82  
 The Funeral Car [...] 92  
 Funeral [...] 93  
 The Coffin to face the end.<sup>271</sup>

It is clear that the events thought most noteworthy were ones in which Nelson displayed remarkable courage: the first illustration connected to the narrative text is "Pursuit of the Bear." (see figure 7) This is an image of one of the stories of Nelson's childhood of questionable veracity, designed to emphasize his inborn fearlessness. While on the *Carcass*, at age about 16, he was discovered hunting a polar bear. The image is obviously intended, as the story is, to reinforce Nelson's early bravery, and the very pretty child represented appears to be much younger than Nelson actually was at the time. Taking this into account, an additional function of the images is that they grant the illusion of widening the audience beyond the limits of those who can read. This book is possibly meant to include a very young portion of the population in its readership, or at least in the consumption of the images.

Figure 7:



Diagram of "Pursuit of the Bear,"  
 from *Life of Nelson*, T.O.  
 Churchill. Original engraving by  
 Bromley.

<sup>271</sup> Churchill, pg. 95.



Figure 8:

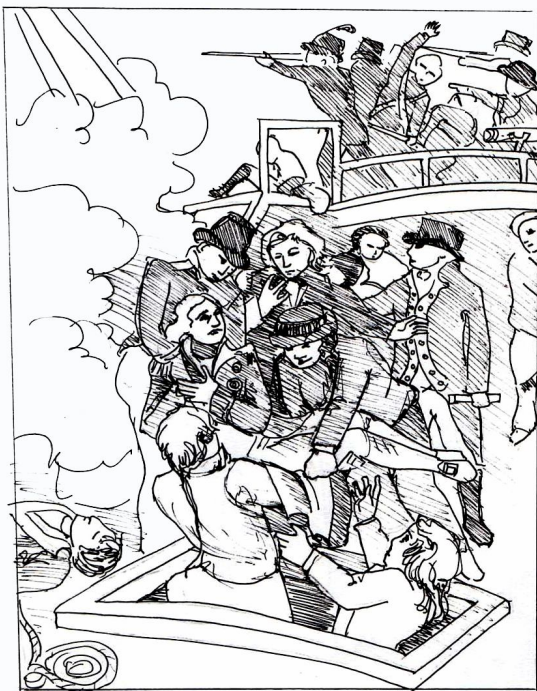


Diagram of "Battle of Trafalgar," from *Life of Nelson*, T.O. Churchill. Original engraving by Bromley.

Looking more closely at a specific plate helps in understanding the iconography throughout the volume, therefore one of the last plates, "Battle of Trafalgar," has been chosen as representative. (see figure 8) Though there are images of Nelson's funeral included in the book, in theme the "Battle of Trafalgar" plate has a greater similarity to the iconography of the Harris Jug and the patchbox. Churchill's *Life* has plates referring to Nelson's death, the funeral and the coffin, but the Battle of Trafalgar is the unspoken reason behind his secular canonisation in death; it is the event referred to on the Harris Jug and it is the conspicuous-by-its-absence reference on the lid of

the patchbox. Without his willingness to die at Trafalgar and his expiration at the moment of victory, his death would have been among the many, rather than singled out and exploited later.<sup>272</sup> Additionally, the placement of the "Battle of Trafalgar" plate in the book creates a particular reading of the image; one pointing to the same preconditions for the glorious death of Nelson implied by the Harris Jug and the patchbox lid. The plate shows sailors lowering the fallen Nelson through the hatch of the *Victory*, moments after he was shot. Fighting continues in the background, as it must, but an officer, likely Thomas Masterman Hardy, Nelson's flag captain, is one who has noticed and grieves. Nelson looks on stoically, acknowledging that he knows what it means to be shot with a musket ball. Nelson has done his duty (as England expects of him) at the expense of his own life.

<sup>272</sup> Jenks "Contesting the Hero," *Passim*.

The *dead* Nelson is still absent, and the dramatic moment of the fatal wound can be allowed because we don't *see* it. It is understood that he has been shot, and it is implied that he is in pain; the audience knows the story.

The images of Nelson on the two ceramic objects would, understandably and obviously, be consumed differently than the illustrations in the book. It would be possible, depending on where the objects were displayed, to passively absorb the images and the messages of the Harris Jug and the patch box. Churchill's *Life of Nelson*, on the other hand, would require more effort on the part of the audience to fully decode the meanings of the images. There is a distinct possibility that the illustrations in the book would be consumed before the audience was capable of reading; as John Berger points out: "The child looks and recognizes before it can speak."<sup>273</sup> However, illustrated books of the size and likely price of Churchill's *Life* would discourage this as a common situation: the book would be kept in a safe place and not given to children as a picture book is now. Churchill's *Life*, therefore presupposes an audience that is capable of taking in the prescribed text and using that to form the understanding of the images, or an audience who is allowed to see the images in relation to the parts of the text already read. The image is inserted opposite page 82, which means that it would be viewed immediately after the prayer Nelson wrote the night before Trafalgar (pg. 81):

May the great God, whom I worship, grant to my country, and for the benefit of Europe in general, a great and glorious victory; and may no misconduct tarnish it; and may humanity, after victory, be the predominant feature in the British fleet! For myself, individually, I commit my life to Him that made me; and may his blessing alight on my endeavours for serving my country faithfully! To Him I resign myself, and the just cause which is intrusted to me to defend. Amen, Amen, Amen.<sup>274</sup>

It would also be viewed in direct relation to the words: "England expects every man will do his duty," printed on the page opposite the image.<sup>275</sup> On the next page, Nelson is struck by the musket

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<sup>273</sup> John Berger. *Ways of Seeing*. (London: Penguin Books, 1972), pg. 7.

<sup>274</sup> Churchill, 81

<sup>275</sup> *Ibid*, at 82.

ball that killed him. The implication: Nelson knew God's will, he entrusted his soul to God, fighting in a just cause. He did his duty.

Another indication of the contemporary affection for Nelson is that this book would have cost a mint. In the first few decades of the nineteenth century, developments in printing caused a boom in publishing.<sup>276</sup> The steam-powered press, invented in 1814, is only one example.<sup>277</sup> Churchill's *Life* predates this. The size of the book and the usage of the paper (wide margins, large text) indicate that it is a more expensive volume: though mechanised papermaking was introduced in 1803,<sup>278</sup> by 1810, it was still not as inexpensive a process as it became later on. Churchill's *Life* belongs to the eighteenth-century tradition, when few people could afford books, let alone ones containing engravings.<sup>279</sup> That a book such as this would go into more than one edition (the copies discussed are both second editions) means that there was call for it.

As a *lieu de mémoire*, the book has a much more carefully constructed narrative than the Harris Jug or the patchbox discussed. The assumption, as already considered, was that the images would be viewed and decoded in relation to a narrative, thus there is a strong influence on what meanings emerge. The story recounted is one that treats Nelson's behaviour as everyday: the narrative is not flamboyant or melodramatic. The images, in contrast, show war, injury and ultimately imply death, though a sanitised death. As a whole, we are possibly meant to interpret the images to mean that we, too, can do this; that this is the *right thing* to do.

As outlined in several paragraphs above, the emphasis on a particular hegemonic brand of nineteenth century masculinity is obvious. The popular militarism that emerged throughout the century was heavily influenced by the fact that there were very few serious naval battles after Trafalgar until the First World War. Imagery glorified the sacrifice and downplayed the pain; it

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<sup>276</sup> Anderson, 2.

<sup>277</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>278</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>279</sup> Anderson, *passim*.

becomes easier to support a war when memory of the actuality of battle is obscured by the passage of time. The discussion of the division between public and private space in the later nineteenth century opens up the possibility that (using George Behlmer's understanding) the public infringed on the private with the impression that this was for the good of society: the private space was, consequently, not *entirely* private. Later on in the century, also, the kind of hegemonic militaristic brand of masculinity symbolized by Nelson came to be essentialised and concentrated as both an

Figure 9:



Postcard © the Royal Naval Museum Library, Portsmouth

escape from the domestic situations that men found themselves in, and as an active attempt to bolster support for the empire through creating a willingness to die for King (later, Queen) and Country.<sup>280</sup> One postcard, with an image of Nelson's column and a childlike sailor saluting, inscribed with the phrase: "You can pin your faith on us!" mailed in 1914, serves as an example.<sup>281</sup> (see figure 9) The end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth century was a time when the idea of masculinity was redefined.<sup>282</sup> From the efforts required to protect England from invasion by the French, popular militarism sprang up<sup>283</sup> and Nelson's death occurred at precisely the right time for him to become a poster-boy for the cause. It is from the nineteenth century that the modern idea of the professional soldier emerges.<sup>284</sup> The contemporary result of this, the result that I feel to be the logical postmodern conclusion to this kind of representation, will be discussed in Chapter 3.

<sup>280</sup> Francis, 643.

<sup>281</sup> Michael Paris discusses, in support of his argument about the pleasure culture of war, how it was possible for boys as young as six to wear miniature officer's uniforms in the nineteenth century. (Paris, 136-140)

<sup>282</sup> Horne, 24.

<sup>283</sup> Dudink and Hagemann, 14.

<sup>284</sup> Horne, 27-28.

### Chapter 3: Nelson 200 Years On

That Lord Nelson's image has been repeatedly assigned and reassigned meanings seems obvious in the analysis. From only a brief discussion of private and public space, it can be understood that images of Nelson played a role in nineteenth-century British collective memory and in the understanding of British masculinity within that context. Discussion of how the memory of Nelson was observed, recorded, read, constructed, *re*constructed and reinforced is a task open to any historian of nineteenth-century Britain, but the collective memory of Nelson continues to be built. He has now, in the process of spanning two centuries, been essentialised, extrapolated, and used in a wide variety of ways to navigate masculinity by both genders. There have periodically been public commemorations of Nelson's death and the Battle of Trafalgar – performative *lieux de mémoire* – that rely on a dominant narrative and an internally consistent memory, but against a backdrop of increasingly heterogeneous paradigms. Because of this, in the twenty-first century, Nelson has become the ultimate symbol for a *variety* of white British masculinities. Modern representations of Nelson, finding their roots in nineteenth century representations, have taken the original meanings and rewritten them, emphasising what was considered significant in each. The result of this is that Nelson becomes a *lieu de mémoire* for a consistently large number of people, but in different capacities, with different emphasis; the image and the memory of Nelson, already accessed at multiple sites in time and space, has now been exponentially expanded.

There are events that rely on memory to have meaning, and meanings that are built upon the memory of these events; to clarify, using Paul Connerton's example, the French Revolution required the memory of and reacted specifically against the memory of the Ancien Regime.<sup>285</sup> In the past two centuries, there have been numerous opportunities for public celebrations, for performative *lieux de*

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<sup>285</sup> Connerton, 7.

*mémoire*, in relation to Horatio Nelson: most prominent are Nelson's funeral (1806), the Trafalgar Centennial (1905) and the Trafalgar Bicentennial (2005). Each of these was approached differently by citizens and political figures alike, and as such bore traces of what Nelson meant at that time and what he was manipulated to mean. It has been suggested by Timothy Jenks that Nelson's funeral was not simply an exercise in remembrance, but an elaborately constructed performance with layered multiple meanings intended to sway public perception of the Admiralty, the Navy and politicians.<sup>286</sup> The Centennial and Bicentennial celebrations, too, had this kind of political, social and economic purpose.

Nelson's was the first state funeral for a non-member of the Royal Family.<sup>287</sup> Marianne Czisnik has pointed out that the newspapers played up the ceremony,<sup>288</sup> but this, too, is significant, as it demonstrates a desire to ensure a grand-scale commemoration. Nelson's funeral was executed to play into an "existing debate concerning the conduct of the war,"<sup>289</sup> and bolster the public standing of Pitt's ministry.<sup>290</sup> As a *lieu de mémoire*, Nelson's funeral employed a recollection of the past: it was organized by the medieval College of Arms, and as such, places Nelson in a historical timeline, among other glorified figures of England's history. However, as a state funeral for a non-royal person, it created a division between the past (anxiety over French invasion) and the present (decisive victory, and potentially victorious future) and in doing so, drew even more attention to Nelson and his accomplishments. The Battle of Trafalgar was why England was safe, but Nelson's funeral was the stronger *lieu de mémoire* because it was witnessed by most of London.

In 1895 the Navy League began supporting the idea of a yearly Trafalgar Day ceremony, to remember Nelson, and to raise patriotic spirits and recruits.<sup>291</sup> The following year, in light of political

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<sup>286</sup> Jenks, "Contesting the Hero," *passim*.

<sup>287</sup> Czisnik, 5-7.

<sup>288</sup> *Ibid*, at 8.

<sup>289</sup> Jenks, "Contesting the Hero," 424.

<sup>290</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>291</sup> Czisnik, 125.

potential, it became a much larger event.<sup>292</sup> When Britain and France formed the Entente Cordiale, Arthur Conan Doyle wrote that it would be “unchivalrous to exult over a beaten foe,”<sup>293</sup> suggesting they name Nelson’s birthday ‘Nelson Day.’<sup>294</sup> Instead, on October 21, 1900, wreaths were laid in Trafalgar Square for the Spanish and French dead.<sup>295</sup> At the Canadian Trafalgar Centennial ceremony in Ottawa meaning of the Battle itself was reassigned:

...the cause for which Nelson fought and died, was not the triumph of one race over another, as ignorant people have sometimes imagined; it was the cause of freedom as opposed to despotism, of self-government as opposed to autocracy, of peaceful industrial development as opposed to the coercion of a tyrant....I would have you remember that Nelson gladly died that the children of England and of France too might be free.<sup>296</sup>

This might have very much surprised Nelson, who is famously reported to have said “you must hate a Frenchman as you do the devil.”<sup>297</sup> *The Times* reported on October 21, 1905, that the publication *Canada* urged that French-Canadians should be exempt from attending Trafalgar Day celebrations, pointing out potential problems for the Entente Cordiale.<sup>298</sup> However, *The Times* also discussed Nelson celebrations in the Colonies, hanging Imperial meanings on the memory of the Admiral.<sup>299</sup> At the turn of the twentieth century, the stronger impulse was to commemorate Nelson and the associated Imperial power gained thanks to British control of the seas, than to try to assuage new allies.

The Bicentennial Celebration was a halting, apologetic affair, but betrayed a residual enthusiastic affection for the memory of Nelson. Critics of the celebration drew attention to

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<sup>292</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>293</sup> Arthur Conan Doyle. “Nelson Day,” Letters to the Editor. *The Times* (Wednesday, Oct 20, 1897; pg. 12; Issue 35339; col A)

<sup>294</sup> Doyle, “Nelson Day,” Arthur Conan Doyle. “Nelson Day,” Letters to the Editor. *The Times* (Saturday, Oct 23, 1897; pg. 11; Issue 35342; col E)

<sup>295</sup> Czisnik, 126.

<sup>296</sup> *Trafalgar day at Ottawa: celebration of the centennial of the Battle of Trafalgar by the children of the schools.* (Ottawa?: s.n., 1905?), pg. 6.

<sup>297</sup> Southey, 43-44.

<sup>298</sup> *The Times*. (Saturday, Oct 21, 1905; pg. 7; Issue 37844; col C)

<sup>299</sup> “The Nelson Centenary Celebrations.” *The Times*, (Saturday, Oct 21, 1905; pg. 14; Issue 37844; col A.)

Nelson's treatment of his wife and his bloody execution of rebels in Naples.<sup>300</sup> Adam Nicolson wrote that the celebrations were an unnecessary glorification of an horrific event.<sup>301</sup> June Purvis's review of the wreath laying on HMS *Victory* on October 21 emphasized the maleness and "laddishness" of Nelson and the whole affair, though she fell short of actually criticising this.<sup>302</sup> A re-enactment of the Battle of Trafalgar was staged, but so as not to offend anyone the combatants were named the red and blue fleets.<sup>303</sup> The Bicentennial Celebration relied on recollection of not the memory of Nelson, but rather the memory of the past 200 years in relation to Nelson. The way it was executed shows the strength of the memory of Nelson in the national imaginary. Though his actions would now be unacceptable, it would have been even more unacceptable to *not* celebrate the Bicentennial of the Battle of Trafalgar because of Nelson's accumulated meanings in the collective memory.

I have discussed these three events because they show the public sway of the memory of Nelson, the enduring strength of it, and the public status he now holds. After the nineteenth century laid the ground work, even opposition to the commemoration of the events cannot overturn what has been in some cases literally laid in stone. Recall, for example, London Mayor Ken Livingstone's attempts to move "heroes" from Trafalgar square and the ire that this raised.<sup>304</sup> Why was it so important to celebrate the 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of this battle and, at that, emphasise only one individual present at the battle? It can only be speculated: perhaps out of tradition, perhaps because there is an agenda to try to rebuild Imperial pride in Great Britain, perhaps simply because they thought *they ought to*. Despite the deliberate attempts to point out the present unacceptability of Nelson's life and behaviour, the patterns of veneration are too strong to be removed. As pointed out in the introduction to this thesis, the concept of the "Brideshead Phenomena"<sup>305</sup> applies to Nelson: there is

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<sup>300</sup> Roberts, 47.

<sup>301</sup> Roberts, 48.

<sup>302</sup> Purvis, *passim*.

<sup>303</sup> Roberts, 46.

<sup>304</sup> Kelso; Hulme.

<sup>305</sup> Jordanova, 131.



nostalgia for a fictional glorious past.<sup>306</sup> In modern representations of Admiral Nelson, it is tempting to simply re-state and re-present outdated ideologies and it is easy for a passive audience to read such things in the work not as references to a past time but as possibilities in the present. Despite persistent attempts to de-sanctify the memory of Nelson, he continues to hold the attention and adoration of the public in a kind of “hagiography,” to borrow Harold Nicolson’s term.<sup>307</sup>

Through public monuments and official avenues of performative memorials, the image of Nelson has become part of the collective memory in British culture. In public and private space, Nelson’s image circulated across multiple sites but it was limited to the actual space in which it existed. The image of Nelson, as one of the first “celebrities” is historically seen on emerging media: for example, developments in printing facilitated the consumption of images of the Admiral in poorer homes in the form of illustrated books. Though Nelson died before the advent of photography, it, too, was used to perpetuate the visual memory of Nelson in the form of veneration of significant spaces, such as Trafalgar Square or HMS *Victory*. Film followed suit, as *Nelson*, based on Southey’s *Life of Nelson* was released in 1918,<sup>308</sup> *Nelson* in 1926,<sup>309</sup> and *That Hamilton Woman* in 1941. Accordingly, Nelson has been once again re-presented in the relatively new medium of the Internet.

As Marx argues, those who control the means of production also control what is produced; this still holds true.<sup>310</sup> To a certain extent, the Internet has democratized the production and dissemination of knowledge: it has facilitated users’ and consumers’ role in the co-creation of understanding<sup>311</sup> through multidirectional communication.<sup>312</sup> This means that there is no one person or group of people dictating how Nelson is represented, but wide and varied *groups* of people. This

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<sup>306</sup> Antoinette Burton, “India Inc.? Nostalgia, memory and the empire of things,” in Stuart Ward, ed. *British culture and the end of empire*. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), pg. 217.

<sup>307</sup> Harold Nicolson, 109-131.

<sup>308</sup> The Internet Movie Database. <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0009425/> (accessed September 23, 2007)

<sup>309</sup> The Internet Movie Database. <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0017199/> (accessed September 23, 2007)

<sup>310</sup> Sturken and Cartwright, 166.

<sup>311</sup> *Ibid*, at 151-156; 168.

<sup>312</sup> *Ibid*, at 160.

could have produced chaos, but interestingly, his image emerges as a definite set of discrete masculinities based, logically, on the memory of the nineteenth century.

Gertrude Himmelfarb pointed out in 1996 that “the Internet does not distinguish between the true and the false, the important and the trivial, the enduring and the ephemeral.”<sup>313</sup> If approached as a secondary source that assumes authority and measured “truth” of content, this is clearly a problem,<sup>314</sup> but the sources of information and the opinions on the internet create a complete image of the *users*. It is a *primary* source for addressing the understanding of an historic individual. Access to the internet is limited to those who can afford it or who have been given the opportunity to use it;<sup>315</sup> any image on the internet is both ubiquitous among users, geographically spreading the audience, but limited *to* users.<sup>316</sup> Cyberspace is an arena for dissenting views and differing opinions, but even though there is this possibility, Nelson’s image continues to be presented as an extrapolation of what it was in the nineteenth century. In cyberspace, which operates primarily visually,<sup>317</sup> there is no one dominant narrative on Nelson himself, but his enduring primary signification as the Ultimate White British Male is a logical conclusion of just over two centuries of layered meanings.

During the 2006 World Cup in Germany, the website of the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (International Federation of Association Football, or FIFA) displayed an image of the crew of the HMS *Illustrious* sending a fond message to the England team. It was not an image of Nelson, but recalled him in a nostalgic, laddish and affectionate way. It was an aerial photograph of the crew standing in formation, spelling the words “England expects ....” It was textual, but like Nelson’s original flag signal, in that it relied on the visual to communicate a message from the ship

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<sup>313</sup> Roy Rosenzweig, “Digital Archives Are a Gift of Wisdom to Be Used Wisely,” in Albert Rollis, ed. *New Media*. (New York: H. W. Wilson, 2006) pg. 128.

<sup>314</sup> *Ibid*, *passim*.

<sup>315</sup> Sturken and Cartwright, 151-156.

<sup>316</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>317</sup> *Ibid*, at 138.

over a great distance. The difference is that through the means of the internet, the geographical area over which the message could be communicated is extended almost indefinitely, and it does not need the whole phrase for everyone to understand what it means. Nelson is not present visually, but the image requires a memory of Nelson, and an existing knowledge of the phrase, in order for the audience to make meaning.

The context of soccer as a site of racism and extreme prejudice is well-known.<sup>318</sup> The anti-Semitic rivalry between the Tottenham Hotspur and Chelsea teams are only one example.<sup>319</sup> To illuminate further, there are other consistently militaristic chants that emerge. During soccer matches between England and Germany, it is not surprising to hear the phrase "Two World Wars and One World Cup" (especially since the World Cup in question was won against West Germany) and in matches between England and Spain, the defeat of the Spanish Armada is sometimes referenced.<sup>320</sup> There is a masculine British identity presented here that relies on memory of military triumph: the image shows a literal *lieu de mémoire* paralleling the football team with the fleet at Trafalgar. Where it is no longer acceptable to kill the opposition, beating them in sport is a close second alternative. Physical prowess of players parallels the speed and ability of the Royal Navy at Trafalgar, and football success replaces a bloody victory. This is very much in keeping with the pleasure culture of war discussed in previous chapters, and shows itself to be a kind of logical conclusion to the attitude that there is a joy to be had in the success of a military manoeuvre isolated from the actuality of the bloody sacrifice. War has become like a game, and games have replaced world war. This is not entirely a new phenomenon. Henry Newbolt's poem *Vitae Lampada* is a famous example paralleling football and battle, and Newbolt wrote in 1929, as an introduction to the battle of Trafalgar that

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<sup>318</sup>Michael Henderson. "Bad career moves." *Spectator* 294.9162 (March 13, 2004): 63(1); Jon Garland and Michael Rowe. "Field of dreams? An assessment of antiracism in British football." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 25.2 (April 1999): 335.

<sup>319</sup> Franklin Foer. *How Soccer Explains the World*. (New York: HarperCollins, 2004), pgs. 65-88.

<sup>320</sup> Andrei S Markovits. "A red card for England?." *Foreign Policy* (July-August 2003): 111(2).

"...there is no real interest to be got out of watching any game unless you know what the players are doing; and a sea-fight when you do understand it is the finest game ever played by men against men."<sup>321</sup> The image of the crew of HMS *Illustrious* picks up where Newbolt left off, and communicates that the reputation of Britain still somewhat relies on the physical superiority of good, British men. This image partially represents the dominant narrative as supplied through (semi)official sources: the World Cup is not an organisation exclusive to Britain, but the image must have been made in cooperation with the Royal Navy if for no other reason than there are strict guidelines regarding photography of military properties. The most important difference, however, between this image and others discussed in previous chapters is that this one is ironic and likely intended to be funny. In this context, "England Expects ..." appears to have retained the original meaning, but with a different spin.

The internet democratises: it provides opportunity to make public a personal discourse and spread an idiosyncratic reading or representation of an image. Fan communities and social-networking groups have made this much easier: blog sites such as Livejournal, Blogger and MySpace create a means through which anyone with a computer can broadcast their personal opinions regarding arts, sports and current events. It also makes an opportunity for information to be essentialised, extrapolated, skewed and disseminated as such, in a way that a juried publication or a television program would not: there is no quality control because it is neither an elaborate nor expensive proposition to simply click "publish" on the website. Anonymity prevents legal action for misinformation and copyright violation, and grants freedom of opinion.<sup>322</sup> The types of images of Nelson that are found on these sites have something in common with folk art from the nineteenth-

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<sup>321</sup> Henry Newbolt. *Heroes of Land and Sea*. (Toronto: Longmans, Green & Company, 1929), pg. 82.

<sup>322</sup> Interestingly, in some fandoms, there is full acknowledgement of copyright violation on sites such as YouTube, and notification that something has been put up there will spread quickly through the fansites and networks so that the maximum number of people can see it and rip it before it is taken down for copyright violation. It is acknowledged that it *will* be taken down, but people are willing to risk their privileges in order to make sure that what they have is shared with other people who care about the same things they do.

century: there is an essentialization of the meaning of Nelson as interpreted and re-presented by the individual creating the representation. Superficially, there is no consistency in representation, but all reflect what was perceived as important by the creator.

When trying to discuss Nelson on the Internet, one is inundated with an enormous volume of content: there is little limitation to space on the internet. "Horatio Nelson" returns 78,800 images in a Google image search and "Lord Nelson" returns 388,000. It becomes apparent that a direct comparison cannot be made between the nineteenth century and the present day. Additionally, there are variations of his name and title that could produce an inestimable number of images. Because of this, a few specific, representative images must suffice for discussion.

The World Cup image introduces the first category: humour. It was not always the case that people joked about Nelson or masculinity, and it was a slow, convoluted process to get to the point where they could. At some point in the middle of the twentieth century, it became acceptable to address traditional Victorian masculinity as a point of fun, possibly connected to the post-WWII dissolution of the Empire. As an extension of this, it became acceptable to laugh at Nelson, or at least good naturedly rib him. In the nineteenth century, he was seldom, if ever, the object of humour.<sup>323</sup> Even *Punch* magazine, famous for not taking *anything* seriously, seldom referenced Nelson directly. Instead, they created a comedic character out of Nelson's Column. Thus, humour surrounding Nelson was not linked to Nelson himself, but rather to memory and interpretation of representations of him. To further illustrate, *1066 And All That*, first published in 1930, depends on the visual representation of Nelson instead of the historical actor for their jokes:

Napoleon ought never to be confused with Nelson, in spite of their hats being so alike; they can most easily be distinguished from one another by the fact that Nelson always stood with his arm *like this*, while Napoleon always stood with his arms *like that*.<sup>324</sup>

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<sup>323</sup> In a scene in *England, Their England*, by A. G. Macdonell, a Scotsman and a Welshman discuss the English and conclude that there are only two things you must never "rag on"; these are the team-nature of cricket and Lord Nelson. (A.G. Macdonell. *England, Their England*. [London: Macmillan & co., 1957, first published 1933], pg. 40)

<sup>324</sup> Sellar and Yeatman, 97.

In both cases, the source of the humour is not in Nelson's actions, but in how other people have seen him; Nelson is not the subject of the joke. One of the earliest breaks in this, though it still falls short of actually mocking Nelson, is the Nelson death scene in *Carry On Jack* (1963). Nelson's death in *That Hamilton Woman* (1941), references Alexander Devis' painting *The Death of Nelson*,<sup>325</sup> and was intended as a solemn heroic death scene. In *Carry On Jack*, both the painting and the scene from *That Hamilton Woman* are reinterpreted: playing up the homosexual innuendo<sup>326</sup> of the phrase "Kiss me, Hardy." In all of these comedic examples, the memory not of Nelson but of the past representation of Nelson is relied upon for the joke to work.

There are two major ways that subsequent representation could have developed. There could have been an extreme-to-the-point-of-ridiculous hypermasculine Nelson or a secretly homosexual Nelson, based on the much-disputed "Kiss me, Hardy" request. Adding to the mix are the stereotypical cultural associations made with sailors ("Hello, sailor!") and the assumption that hypermasculine characters are possibly trying to compensate for what is assumed to be a less-than-masculine tendency. Notably, the context of both of these relies on perceptions of masculinity. Both the hypermasculine Nelson and the secretly homosexual Nelson characters are shown in the fan representation of Nelson in a light-hearted and celebratory way.

The "Kiss me, Hardy" type has been taken up energetically across the twentieth-century, represented notably in *Carry On, Jack* and a sketch from the 1970s British sketch comedy series *Rutland Weekend Television* in which "Kiss me, Hardy," is extrapolated to the point where Nelson (portrayed by Eric Idle) stands up to reveal he is wearing ladies' stockings and a garter-belt. Use of homosexuality as a comedic device can be connected to the fact that homosexuality was not

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<sup>325</sup> The Devis portrait, interestingly, is considered the very last portrait of Nelson, as the artist reportedly drew his preliminary sketches while viewing the body. [Richard Walker. *The Nelson Portraits*. (Portsmouth: Royal Naval Museum Publications, 1998), pg. 160.]

<sup>326</sup> Homosexuality was not decriminalised in England until 1967, so there is the additional comedy material of playing on a taboo subject.

decriminalised in most parts of the western world until the latter half of the twentieth century, and the anxiety of men could be dissipated if it was dealt with as a point of fun. There are also countless comic-strip applications of the phrase, including one, "Kiss me and tell, Hardy," published during discussions of homosexuality in the military.<sup>327</sup>

As part of the technological advances in the past few years, it has become possible and even common for amateur and hobby filmmakers to create and distribute their own films via the internet. Some are the first steps towards pursuing a career; others are made for the pleasure of the filmmaker alone. In addition to the traditional independent film format, there are some that use footage from their favourite television series or films creating a narrative not present in the original<sup>328</sup> and some using existing images edited together on Windows Movie Maker. These can be disseminated either on a devoted website created by the filmmakers, or on group sites such as YouTube, where users can create membership aliases and upload their own work, searchable by designated keywords set by the filmmaker.

One noteworthy example, found through a search on YouTube, is Invisible Engine's *Dear Lord Horatio Nelson*.<sup>329</sup> Invisible Engine is a group of three young men, Sean Bury, Chris Cantwell and Matt Wyatt, who came together to produce a feature-length film. As side projects, they create and distribute via the internet short comedic films.<sup>330</sup> *Dear Lord Horatio Nelson*, is only one of many that are viewable on their website ([www.invisibleengine.com](http://www.invisibleengine.com)). Lionel, the main character, slowly loses his mind throughout, illustrated through increasingly bizarre live-action sections interspersed with segments using voiceovers and existing nineteenth-century images of the Admiral. The viewer is ready to enter into this premise (that Nelson is writing back and forth to an awkward yet ambitious

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<sup>327</sup> Czisnik, 133.

<sup>328</sup> A major subgenre of these is to create love stories between male characters in films and television series using existing footage. This is a development from slash fanfiction. (Storey, 164.)

<sup>329</sup> Invisible Engine. <http://www.invisibleengine.com/index.php/site/single/46/> (accessed November 6, 2007.)

<sup>330</sup> Invisible Engine. <http://www.invisibleengine.com/index.php/site/about> (accessed November 6, 2007.)

young man, encouraging him to work hard and stay in school) but we find out that Lionel is ignoring his own actual life context to try to be like his hero. He purchases a sabre to kill his roommates, one who is of French descent, and the other who may be Canadian with Mexican or South American relatives. "You must hate a Frenchman as you do the devil"<sup>331</sup> is reiterated in the film using the voice of Nelson as "since [I lost my arm] I have held every Spaniard, as well as Frenchmen, to be the devil himself." Lionel eventually eroticises his affection for Nelson, saying "I think I'm in love with you," talking about how there must be a way for them to be together, eventually asking "Is your cock hard?"

The makers of *Dear Lord Horatio Nelson* are aware of the stereotypes of fan culture, and rather eloquently and cleverly parallel the traditional nineteenth-century ideas about heroes with the modern celebrity star system. Nelson was merchandised the same way *Doctor Who* and *Star Wars* are now, so the parallel is an apt one. The filmmakers are also aware of the hegemonic hypermasculinity that Nelson has so long been a symbol of and juxtapose this with contemporary fan culture. Whereas a contemporary celebrity might portray hypermasculinity in a film, playing a military officer or a vigilante, Nelson was the real thing: he carried out executions and was willing, as was so often highlighted in the nineteenth century, to die for King and Country. Invisible Engine presents Lionel as a stereotypical fan, but the punchline of the film, "I would like to help you, but I was killed in the Battle of Trafalgar in 1805," is the reveal. The audience must suspend their disbelief, remaining uncertain as to how to interpret the images until they are shown what is actually going on. Once we are shown the absurdity of the premise we can laugh at it, and laugh at ourselves for also initially entering into it. Importantly, there is a point where we understand what the film is doing, and this will vary according to viewer.

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<sup>331</sup> Southey, 43-44.



*Dear Lord Horatio Nelson* is built upon the layered memory of Nelson, and the images portrayed are tried and tested *lieux de mémoire*. They are collaged together, taking as the jumping-off point the basic assumptions of Nelson's masculinity. The nineteenth-century emphasis is reinforced periodically as Nelson's wounds are drawn attention to and the magnitude of Nelson's accomplishments is emphasised through the juxtaposition of Lionel's banal responses: "Didn't you also lose your right arm? Oh my God. That's rad." When Lionel asks Nelson "Is your cock hard?" the audience is thrust into a bizarre caricature of nineteenth-century masculinity that associates sexuality with violence, war and Imperialism: though Allan Quatermain, as an example of late-nineteenth-century Imperial masculinity is never literally sexually aroused by his conquest, there are repeated situations in which the defeated is feminised,<sup>332</sup> and thus a sexual parallel is made. We are disturbed by, and laugh at Lionel's question, but it is, in a way, an essentialised conclusion to a particular brand of nineteenth-century masculinity. Invisible Engine have interpreted how Nelson is understood, they have anticipated the fears about masculinity (the fear of the violent most superficially, and the deeper fears of lack of masculine guidance for young men<sup>333</sup>) and they have used our memory of Nelson to point to these.

The use of Nelson in a homoerotic context is not always one that is meant to poke fun. Fandom notoriously rejects the dominant accepted discourse surrounding the object of their affection,<sup>334</sup> and the traditional idea of fans as "obsessive losers, lacking ties to the real world"<sup>335</sup> is now currently being criticised as unfair to fans and often based on gender and economic

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<sup>332</sup> Bristow, 134-137.

<sup>333</sup> There has been much discussion in recent years of a crisis in masculinity following the emergence of feminism that addresses discussion of what is acceptable and unacceptable in terms of masculine behaviour. (Mac an Ghaill, *passim*; Kevin Alexander Boon. "Heroes, metanarratives, and the paradox of masculinity in contemporary Western culture," in *The Journal of Men's Studies* 13.3 (Spring 2005): p301(12), *passim*; Kevin Alexander Boon. "Men and nostalgia for violence: culture and culpability in Chuck Palahniuk's *Fight Club*" in *The Journal of Men's Studies* 11.3 (Spring 2003): p267(10), *passim*.)

<sup>334</sup> Storey, 162-164; Sturken and Cartwright, 67-68; Kirsten Pullen. "Everybody's Gotta Love Somebody, Sometime: Online Fan Community in David Gauntlett and Ross Horsley, eds. *Web Studies*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New York: Oxford University Press) pgs. 80-91.

<sup>335</sup> Pullen, pg. 82.

prejudices.<sup>336</sup> Instead, fans are being seen as rejecting the pressure to passively consume and are in fact engaging with the content, posing an oppositional gaze.<sup>337</sup> It is not necessarily the case that male characters are being mocked if they are presented in a romantic context with another male character. In fact, as is examined exhaustively in Salmon and Symons' *Warrior Lovers*, it represents a particular affectionate understanding of those characters. Slash fiction is stories written by fans that represent a romantic relationship between two male characters from an existing source. A prior taboo on representing actual celebrities in male/male romantic situations is also being lifted, and fanfiction writers are writing what is called RPS or Real Person Slash. It is no great leap to see how writers and artists in fan communities with an existing sympathetic understanding of the plight of homosexual men throughout history (especially in Nelson's Navy, where it could be an executionable offence<sup>338</sup>) would embrace the idea. Indeed, there is a livejournal community devoted to discussion of the history of Nelson's Navy, with a particular interest in homosexuality in that context, called "Kiss me, Hardy!"<sup>339</sup> This community is an arena where women explore male sexuality and the history of a traditionally masculine institution. There is much discussion as to why women would want to discuss, write and read about homosexual relationships between men. Salmon and Symons use a Darwinian model, asking why, evolutionarily, women would wish to discuss male/male relationships.<sup>340</sup> Constance Penley posits that it is an equalling out of the traditional romantic formula (the inequality of "dominance and submission" as the male and female roles).<sup>341</sup> However, regardless of the intricacies of *why* it is done, it represents, in the specific case of Nelson, yet another

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<sup>336</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>337</sup> Storey, 163.

<sup>338</sup> Arthur Gilbert. "Buggery and the British Navy, 1700-1861" in Wayne R. Dynes and Stephen Donaldson, eds. *History of homosexuality in Europe and America*. (New York: Garland Pub., 1992), pg. 132.

<sup>339</sup> "Kiss Me Hardy!" [http://community.livejournal.com/kiss\\_me\\_hardy/](http://community.livejournal.com/kiss_me_hardy/) (accessed November 7, 2007)

<sup>340</sup> Catherine Salmon and Donald Symons. *Warrior Lovers: erotic fiction, evolution and female sexuality*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), *passim*.

<sup>341</sup> Constance Penley, *NASA/TREK: popular science and sex in America*. (New York: Verso, 1997), pg. 125.

appropriation of his image based on memory, and the understanding of the layered meanings that Nelson has acquired over the last two centuries.

What is most interesting visually about these mostly text-based communities (Livejournal is not an image-heavy network) are the avatars. Understandably, with the stereotypes of fandom and the taboos still surrounding male homosexuality and non-conventional female sexuality, users chat under aliases and use icons to identify themselves. Livejournal icons must communicate who their user is in the space of 100 pixels by 100 pixels, at 72 dpi, the lowest resolution necessary for a computer screen.<sup>342</sup> There is the possibility to animate them, which provides more information, but even so they are limited. In essence, they are the visual manifestation of what that user thinks is important and a hint at what their journal discusses. It is a way for users to identify individuals they might find sympathetic to their interests.

As there is no limit to what can appear on Livejournal icons, except for the size restrictions, Nelson unsurprisingly makes an appearance. The general theme of Nelson livejournal icons is an affectionate nod to the historical actor, with reference made to his military and sexual prowess. For the most part, Nelson icons use existing images of Nelson, mostly portraits painted during his lifetime, cropped to fit or to emphasise some aspect of Nelson's personality with accompanying text aimed as a caption or a "bumper sticker" type epigram. In one case, all but Nelson's hands are cropped from the Rigaud portrait, implying capability, possibly alluding to the later loss of his arm; in another case, his medals are isolated from the rest of one of the Lemuel Abbott portraits, emphasising his military accomplishment. When text is applied, it is mostly intended to be funny: "lefties do it to the death," "Don't Fuck with #1" or "Even one-armed Nelson pwns<sup>343</sup> you." They

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<sup>342</sup> Interestingly, they have this need to communicate a great deal in a tiny space in common with patchboxes.

<sup>343</sup> "pwn" is internet gaming slang. It is a stand-in for "own" as in when a player is defeated, they are "owned" by the person who defeated them; the "p" is used instead of "o" because the keys are beside each other on a standard qwerty keyboard, the implication being that the person "pwning" the defeated was too excited to hit the right keys. Much internet slang is based structurally on the keyboard, for example, if an individual is excited about something, they will "keyboard mash" or hit a series of random keys, appearing on screen as gibberish, but communicating un-containable

are not serious or weighty, and they have something in common with the widespread Internet practice of taking images and captioning them, called macros.<sup>344</sup> Nelson livejournal icons represent a logical progression from the layered history of the Admiral: they emphasize overall his power, capability and his masculinity to a caricatured degree.

The user of the Livejournal icons is not always the creator and the creator is not always listed, though it is considered a common courtesy to credit them. There are icon communities, to which livejournal users can post sometimes hundreds of icons at once for use by whoever wants them. Of interest in this discussion is the community "Age of Sail Icons"<sup>345</sup> devoted to Age of Sail fandoms, that is, fandoms formed around fictional accounts of life in Nelson's Navy. These include Patrick O'Brian's novels, the *Master and Commander* film, C. S. Forester's *Horatio Hornblower* novels, and to a lesser extent, army activities from around the same time period, such as Bernard Cornwell's *Sharpe* series. Many of the livejournal users who list Nelson as an interest or express affection for him also belong to some of these fandoms. It may be that they are interested in history and enjoy stories about it, or it may be that because of their interest in the fictional subject matter, they have found out about Nelson the historical actor. Either way, Nelson is no longer as ubiquitous as he was in the nineteenth century, and so the majority of those who list Nelson as an interest are also interested in modern fictionalisations of Nelson and Nelson's Navy; it has become a specialised interest as opposed to a constant in most people's lives.

As always, discussion of specific examples will help to illustrate. One of the issues that needs to be addressed first, however, is the concept of privacy. The spread of the internet has elicited two

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excitement. By extension, in a rather post-modern way, some users choose to type out the actual words "keyboard mash."

<sup>344</sup> Sometimes referred to as lolcats, or catmacros: images of animals (often cats) with misspelled internet slang. There are numerous variations on this theme. They are memes where the constants are the caption, the consistent miss-spelling of words and most often the font is sans-serif. There are also standard phrases used with appropriate variations, such as "I HAS A BUCKET," which can be turned into, for example, "I HAS A TARDIS" if placed on an image that can be related to Doctor Who.

<sup>345</sup> "Age of Sail Icons." [http://community.livejournal.com/ageofsail\\_icons/](http://community.livejournal.com/ageofsail_icons/) (accessed November 8, 2007)

reactions: the first is paranoia (fear of hackers, fear of sexual predators in terms of children's usage); the second is exhibitionism (nearly full-disclosure of identity and revelation of deeply personal information posted on a blog.)<sup>346</sup> The dominant fears are centred on social-networking sites such as Facebook because it is a requirement that people provide correct information. Facebook is designed to create connections between people who already know each other and creates links based on interests, but also between mutual friends, schools and work organizations, among other things. Livejournal, in contrast, is primarily concerned with creating networks based on interests. In every Livejournal profile page, there is an opportunity to list interests that creates links to other journals with the same interests listed. The attraction for many Livejournal users is the anonymity with which to discuss their interests, and they are also given the opportunity to lock their journals so only other livejournal users designated by them are able to access certain posts. There is a level of assumed anonymity and security in the minds of those posting on Blogger and Livejournal: there is the perception that what they are writing will only be read by friends, even if the content is unlocked, and there is surprise when this is breached. A high-profile example of this is the 2004 case of Jessica Cutler, an employee at Capitol Hill in Washington, who blogged about who she'd slept with. A political gossip site linked to her blog and she received exponentially more hits than average, many of who were able to identify the (powerful) men she'd reported sleeping with.<sup>347</sup> Other examples I encountered include two cases of writers of slash fiction who posted unlocked stories that were subsequently mentioned in the public arena; indeed one was mentioned in a DVD commentary for the original material that she based the story on. The writers were upset that attention had been called to them.<sup>348</sup> Part of the reason for this is the illusion of anonymity, but in addition to that, there

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<sup>346</sup> Carlin Flora. "The decline and fall of the private self: once upon a time, people kept secrets. Today's tell-all bloggers and myspace denizens have made the notion of a guarded personal life feel obsolete." *Psychology Today*. May-June 2007 v40 i3 p82(6), *passim*.

<sup>347</sup> *Ibid*, at 82; Mark Williams. "The talk of the town: you: rethinking privacy in an immodest age." *Technology Review*. Nov-Dec 2007 v110 i6 p84(2), pg. 84.

<sup>348</sup> Out of respect, I am declining to identify them further in this thesis.

is the psychological self-censoring in face-to-face encounters that is bypassed by bloggers.<sup>349</sup> This concerns the below discussion in that it must be made clear that the images came from publicly accessible pages and that there was no violation of privacy in acquiring them.

The two livejournal icons that I would like to discuss are one used by the livejournal user tootsiemuppet<sup>350</sup> and one by the livejournal user twirlychelengk. (see diagrams figure 10) Tootsiemuppet<sup>351</sup> does not credit the maker of the icon in question, nor does she use the icon. Instead, it appears on her profile page, as part of her biography. The icon is animated, flashing the faces of Nelson and his surgeon William Beatty from an unidentified print, probably an intaglio print from the nineteenth century. The narrative of the animation follows the premise that

Nelson would like to have the perfect last words. The series begins with Nelson: "Thank God I have done my duty" and follows Nelson's last moments in a Monty-Pythesque way: "Say Beatty, I feel funny," "You may be dying now, sir." Nelson continues to try to give his last words, but Beatty interjects with "Not yet, sir." The drawn-out sequence (there are several frames where the only text is an ellipsis) brings to mind the numerous nineteenth-century biographies that painstakingly draw out Nelson's last moments over pages with the exhortation that "this was what truly happened." One frame of the sequence that sticks out is Nelson asking Beatty: "Is there time for one last snog with Hardy?" playing on the famous "Kiss me, Hardy." Tootsiemuppet has created other icons along this theme, most notably a portrait of Hardy himself with the caption, "give us a quick handjob, Hardy," likely a reference to the same moment.<sup>352</sup> The marked difference between these and the scene in

Figure 10:



Diagrams of icons used by tootsiemuppet and twirlychelengk

<sup>349</sup> Flora, 83.

<sup>350</sup> I have omitted the URLs of the journals out of concern for the privacy of the users.

<sup>351</sup> Tootsiemuppet also has an icon journal, which is a related journal devoted to posting livejournal icons she has made. She is very open about the usage of them, and asks only to be credited in return.

<sup>352</sup> "Cutie-Snark." <http://cutie-snark.livejournal.com/2702.html#cutid1> (accessed November 8, 2007). I have included this URL because it is not a private journal.

*Carry On Jack* or the Rutland Weekend Television sketch is that homosexuality is presented as another facet of acceptable masculinity, not a mockery or an aspersion cast upon the manliness of the individual in question. Tootsiemuppet lists slash as one of her interests, as well as “nelson” and the specific slash pairings of “aubrey/maturin” and “pullings/mowett” who are characters in the *Master and Commander* book series. From this, it can be deduced that the icon is intended to be affectionate and supportive of potential romantic relationships between men in that situation. It is a variety of masculinity that relies on the *lieu de mémoire* of the phrase “Kiss me, Hardy” that has long occupied the public, read from a modern perspective where homosexuality is an acceptable possibility regardless of whether or not Nelson was actually gay.<sup>353</sup> It is even probable that the long dispute about whether the phrase was in fact “Kiss me” or “Kismet”<sup>354</sup> has contributed to the strength of this *lieu de mémoire*; that the memory of the conflict of opinion has created a greater awareness of that moment than would have been otherwise.

Twirlychelengk’s icon references Nelson and the fictional Captain Jack Aubrey from Patrick O’Brian’s *Master and Commander* series. Her username is likely a reference to Nelson, too, as after his success at the Battle of the Nile in 1799 he was given a chelengk (a decorative pin to be worn on the hat) by the Turkish Sultan.<sup>355</sup> The icon in question is credited to the livejournal user pint\_of\_boyd. It references a scene in the *Master and Commander* film in which Captain Aubrey (who fictionally served with Nelson at the Nile, as is explained in the film) is asked at dinner for an anecdote about the Admiral. Aubrey then tells of once when, as a midshipman, he dined with Nelson. The punchline was that Nelson had asked him to pass the salt. Aubrey is a macho lout; his size and sexual appetite are emphasised in the books, as well as his inattention to his own injury in battle. Twirlychelengk’s

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<sup>353</sup> Of course, it should be noted that it would be anachronistic to say that anyone at that time was a homosexual; as Foucault would point out, the term is a late-nineteenth-century one and did as much in the way of creating the idea of homosexuality as it did in passively defining it.

<sup>354</sup> “Signed sailed and delivered; Lord Nelson.” *Sunday Times (London, England)* (April 3, 2005): 24.

<sup>355</sup> Southey, 123.

icon presupposes knowledge of both this character and Nelson's reputation, and, using a modern colloquialism, implies a hypermasculinity in Nelson. He is traditionally, in popular history, believed to have been a very small man,<sup>356</sup> he *must* be incredibly masculine if he is able to call Aubrey his bitch. There is, again, a level of homoeroticism implied but not in any way meant to be derogatory of Nelson: instead, it implies that Nelson can take what he wants, sexually, without aspersions cast upon him. That he can take this from a character who is already hypermasculine himself tells us that even one-armed, Nelson pwns Aubrey.

Because Nelson was "merchandised" in the nineteenth century, he crosses the gap between historical/legendary character to celebrity. As such he is also subject to the straightforward adoration from young women, as any celebrity might be. He appears on the livejournal community "Hot Dead Guys,"<sup>357</sup> with the caption "Ah ... Lord Nelson. How I love you. I couldn't decide which picture was hotter, so I included them both."<sup>358</sup> The implication is that the poster, livejournal user ari\_enchanted, has a school-girl crush. She is not the only one, and the way that this is expressed is, again, in the co-creation of culture: fan art and fan fiction. There are a variety of sites on which to post these: fanfiction.net (on which there is an adventure story in which Nelson is the main character and another that fictionalises his first days at sea), deviantart.com (a site for displaying artwork created by members), and YouTube. In each of these cases, members upload their work without the content passing a jury. As a result, the work is limited only by societal pressure, and not by what will sell or what follows a company's mandate.

A search on YouTube for "Lord Nelson" yields 344 results. Two of these videos were created and uploaded by the user raerae469; one is entitled *Nelson[:] The man, the lover, the legend*<sup>359</sup> and

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<sup>356</sup> "Signed sailed and delivered; Lord Nelson."

<sup>357</sup> "Hot Dead Guys." [http://community.livejournal.com/hot\\_dead\\_guys/](http://community.livejournal.com/hot_dead_guys/) (accessed November 9, 2007)

<sup>358</sup> "Hot Dead Guys." [http://community.livejournal.com/hot\\_dead\\_guys/16753.html#cutid1](http://community.livejournal.com/hot_dead_guys/16753.html#cutid1) (accessed November 9, 2007)

<sup>359</sup> raerae469. *Nelson[:] The man, the lover, the legend*. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tA5NW4SFX5A> (accessed November 15, 2007)



the other *The story of Nelson and Emma*.<sup>360</sup> The two videos are made using Windows Movie Maker and present narratives about the life of Nelson. Raerae469 is (according to the profile she created on her YouTube page) eleven years old, and lives in the United Kingdom. She currently (as of November 15, 2007) has five videos uploaded: the two mentioned, a video about the landmarks and notable sites of the city of Portsmouth, a fanvid about the *Titanic* movie, and a video of herself yodelling. Of the two Nelson-based videos, the more significant is *The story of Nelson and Emma*. *Nelson[:]* *The man, the lover, the legend* is significant in its own way, following a general narrative of Nelson's life using passages of text and nineteenth-century illustrations against a soundtrack of Baroque music, but *The story of Nelson and Emma* follows raerae469's own narrative; parts of her story, such as Emma visiting Nelson's column, are historically impossible. For the videos, she uses pre-existing images such as portraits, but in *The story of Nelson and Emma*, she has interfered with the originals, editing two paintings together and placing tears on Emma Hamilton's face when she learns of Nelson's death. Raerae469 also uses a still from *That Hamilton Woman*, and an image of re-enactors dressed as Nelson and Emma. It is unclear from this video whether she understands that these are not in fact images of Nelson and Emma.

*The story of Nelson and Emma* emplots the history in a way that raerae469 finds acceptable for her understanding of the affair. *The story of Nelson and Emma* is placed against a soundtrack of Celine Dion's *My Heart Will Go On*, from the *Titanic* soundtrack (listed in her interests as one of her favourite songs). Over the final seconds of the video, after the credits (during which she tells us the film was "made for admirers of Nelson and Emma) she inserts a voiceover of the phrase: "Parting is such sweet sorrow, but I shall say goodnight." She also provides an outline of the story she is telling in the "About This Video" summary space. She begins at the Battle of the Nile, introduces Emma and Nelson, and Sir William Hamilton. The high points of the narrative are Nelson and Emma

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<sup>360</sup> raerae469. *The story of Nelson and Emma*. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o85a8Lt85xY> (accessed November 15, 2007)

falling in love, William Hamilton dying, the birth of Horatia, Nelson's death and Emma's heartbreak. She closes with Emma visiting Nelson's column.

The most obvious comparison to be made, introduced in part by raerae469's similar tribute video to the *Titanic* movie, is between the narratives of *The story of Nelson and Emma* and the 1997 film *Titanic*. Raerae469's tribute to *Titanic* uses the same song, and follows a similar plot structure of the film itself. It is possible that the film inspired her to produce the Nelson video (the *Titanic* tribute is less technically accomplished, as the images are pixellated, and it was uploaded two months before the Nelson video). Whatever the reason for the similarities, it is implied that she moved from the fictional to the historical, and *The story of Nelson and Emma* could be seen somewhat as an amalgamation or hybrid of her other Nelson video and her *Titanic* video. As such, it betrays an understanding of the legendary status of Nelson. She initially created a tribute, then she created a biopic, and finally fictionalised her own understanding of the affair between Emma and Nelson, paralleling it with the forbidden romance between the characters of Jack and Rose in the *Titanic* movie.

Raerae469, if her profile is to be believed (it must be taken as authority in this case) is very young, and so can be forgiven for not having a nuanced understanding of Nelson's story. It would not be expected of her to understand the complexity of hero-making or the relationship between this and contemporary understandings of masculinity. However, as a child, raerae469's naïveté presents us with a stripped-down theme: Nelson has become a legend, he has become something that can be fictionalised, he has become a *character*. Raerae469's interpretation is a product of the romantic narrative of the past two-hundred years, despite the fact that it is ludicrously historically incorrect. She has taken the major players in the story, and forced them into the archetypal roles offered them: she has edited portraits using a computer imaging program, so that Nelson and Emma can be

seen together and embracing for the sake of the narrative.<sup>361</sup> She has inserted digitally “tears” running down Emma’s face when she hears of Nelson’s death. They are historical actors for her, but following the grand tradition of the past two centuries, they are more readily characters, shown doing something that they didn’t do in actuality for the sake of the story. She bestows yet another masculine meaning on Nelson’s death at Trafalgar: Nelson as lover and father, both capacities that in his context required his masculinity and communicated it. *The story of Nelson and Emma* relies on layered memory for the construction of the narrative beyond Nelson. Raerae469 has applied a digital effect to the video to make it look like old film, borrowing credibility based on memory of a history of biographical films and biographies. Because she uses pre-existing images, she relies literally on past representation of Nelson, but again she interprets, placing the portraits and manipulating them to conform to the meaning that she has already applied to Nelson.<sup>362</sup> Raerae469, importantly, also names them in the title as Nelson and Emma. Emma is informal (thus she is an ordinary woman) but Nelson is epic: he is not Horatio, rather simply Nelson, and does not need his titles for her to know who she is talking about and convey that to the audience.

Despite the differences between the internet and past forms of cultural production and dissemination, an obvious comparison can be made between some internet imagery and nineteenth-century folk art. There are numerous embroidery samplers in the collection of the National Maritime Museum and the Royal Naval Museum in Portsmouth, made with the same intention as raerae469’s videos, by the same type of individual: a young girl, refining creative skills, practicing for a greater project later on. In both the nineteenth-century embroidery samplers and raerae469’s videos the creator has chosen this practice as the vehicle for presenting us with Nelson. A young woman might

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<sup>361</sup> This is a standard thing in fandom, referred to as “photomanips” or photomanipulations. It is common in visual fandoms, creating images of things that have never happened, such as two characters kissing who never kiss onscreen.

<sup>362</sup> This is also emphasised in her *Nelson...* video, as he is described primarily as man, lover, and legend. Clearly, this emphasis underlines his maleness, above all, even to an eleven-year-old, and also the memory required to make him a legend. It is the very premise of the idea.

have produced a cut paper image in the nineteenth century including a reference to Nelson or the phrase “England expects ...” and though more than a hundred years has passed, it could be made with the same intention as TRAFALGAR 06 (see figure 11) created using Photoshop and posted by DeviantArt user Steampunk-Girl;<sup>363</sup> they are made in remembrance as a personal response to the narrative the makers have heard in their lifetimes.

The memory of Nelson, constructed and deconstructed as it has been, continues to feature large in a particular understanding of the past of British masculinity. There is not the opportunity to convey the subtleties of “what actually happened,” nor is there the desire to. Nelson has been represented visually in virtually every medium, including now, the internet. The difference in each medium has also led to a difference in representation, as is logical. The internet allows users to contribute their own opinions and spread this with little to no external editing; as a result the subtext of Nelson on the internet varies more widely than, for example, the subtext of Nelson’s Column, because there are so many different people creating images in isolation from each other. Nelson represented on the internet in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries has an extrapolated, essentialised, but most importantly, *individualised* image: his masculinity, defined now by his military successes and his sexuality is the logical conclusion of the way he has been represented since his death. Nelson’s significance has been emphasized and in some cases over-represented in popular consciousness, and, on the internet, this is further essentialised and interpreted by many discrete individuals.

Figure 11:



TRAFALGAR 06, by Steampunk-Girl

<sup>363</sup> Steampunk-girl. “TRAFALGAR 06.” <http://steampunk-girl.deviantart.com/art/TRAFALGAR-06-41768771> (accessed February 4, 2008).

## Conclusion:

What is known about Nelson is that he was born September 29, 1758 and died gloriously October 21, 1805 at the battle of Trafalgar. Biographers consistently attempt to determine exactly what happened between these dates, each emphasizing that *this one* is going to be accurate, *this one* is the real story. There are undeniable facts, such as the dates and participants of the battles, but there is such a variety of *other* things about Nelson that have been written, rewritten, fallen out of favour, been revived, that *wie es eigentlich gewesen*, Ranke's "what actually happened,"<sup>364</sup> would be impossible to determine. Likely, also, it would be moot, as through the years, what Nelson symbolized had far greater importance to cultural memory than the details of the execution of the rebels at Naples or Nelson's own death.

The physical, politically motivated and most obvious *lieux de mémoire* are public memorial monuments. That monuments are inherently political is evidenced by the history of the Nelson Pillar in Dublin, and by the power symbolized by the Barbados Nelson Monument. Similarly, the continued affection for a particular brand of nineteenth-century masculinity is engendered by the reluctance to disrupt the colonial narrative of Trafalgar Square and Nelson's Column. On a more poignant note, the Nelson monuments in Portsmouth represent power, but also an attempt to deal with the violence of World War II. In each of these cases, the image of Nelson is either constructed or he is otherwise symbolically represented, but each has a different function on the audience. As *lieux de mémoire*, each of the Nelson Monuments discussed in Chapter 1 hold not just the original intent of those who commissioned them, but much of the history since, and a meaning in the present of the viewer. The Dublin Spire was an attempt to reassign the space originally occupied by the Nelson Pillar and the colonial violence associated with it. The Barbados Nelson Monument brings to

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<sup>364</sup> Bann, 8.

mind the British presence and is now a tourist site in a continuing colonial narrative. In Trafalgar Square, the “front room”<sup>365</sup> of London, there are attempts being made to disrupt the narrative, but for the most part, it has held strong. Portsmouth, as the major naval base throughout the period when Britannia ruled the seas, similarly capitalizes on educational tourism, fostering British Imperial pride. In each of these cases, “heritage,” as David Lowenthal would write, grants a reverence of the space. In each of the cases, regardless of the state of the Nelson Monument there, the physical public site is a *lieu de mémoire* that would be near-impossible to erase. That the Dublin Spire has been erected over the spot where the Nelson Pillar was betrays the stability of the *lieu de mémoire* of the original monument. Nelson and the particular brand of nineteenth century masculinity that he is associated with continue to have a presence in the landscape.

It is arguable that Nelson was one of the first “celebrities.” In addition to the public adulation, the state funeral and the popular legend perpetuated by numerous exalting biographies, he was one of the first people to be *merchandised*. He died at precisely the right moment to be remembered forever in more than one way. Of course, his actual death, moments after hearing of the French surrender, is poetic and to the tastes of the sentimental early nineteenth century, but in addition, he died at the very beginning of the century that introduced consumerism. As such, technological breakthroughs in production of books, cheap prints, ceramics and glassware, and figurines were used artfully to reinforce messages of further consumption, British identity and the concept of manliness, using Nelson as symbol. It was in the *lieux de mémoire* found in the home that the manipulated meanings of Nelson became entrenched: these objects would be seen every day. Because of this, by the end of the nineteenth century, the image of Nelson was so deliberately loaded that it brought to mind everything that was good and holy and masculine and British; whatever that might be at that particular moment.

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<sup>365</sup> Mace, 15.

Nelson's secular canonisation in British popular consciousness has now reached a logical conclusion: just as each new medium has historically been adopted in representing the Admiral, so, too has the internet. The internet has a limited capacity to democratize interpretation: it is limited to those who have internet access but those who do have near-equal opportunities in their input. The internet and blog sites allow individuals to become co-creators of culture rather than simple consumers. Because of the consistency of representation he has been subject to over the years, the representations of him are not as entirely different as one might assume: he holds a symbolic place in social memory, built consistently since 1805, that dictates the raw materials that those who interpret him on the internet must work with. He represents a variety of masculinities now, pertinent to the early twenty-first century, but built soundly on the foundations of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In light of the continued emphasis placed on the figure of Horatio Nelson, and the number of layered interpretations he is subject to, he will not cease being "memorable" – to borrow a term from Sellar and Yeatman – for some time, as his image and remembered place in the past continues to be alternately contested, strengthened, reinforced and re-created. The official website of the British Royal Navy tells us that: "Horatio Nelson is generally regarded as the greatest officer in the history of the Royal Navy."<sup>366</sup> It cannot be denied that Nelson at least partially earned his reputation as a commander and tactician.<sup>367</sup> There is a certain amount of respect that he is due for this success in his chosen profession, regardless of how he has been mythologized. However, beyond this, as a result of his mythologization, and the repeated recognition of him in films, fiction and fine art, Nelson – arguably the first "celebrity" – is now one of the longest lasting celebrities, too.

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<sup>366</sup> "Viscount Nelson." Royal Navy. <http://www.royal-navy.mod.uk/server/show/nav.3878>, last accessed September 20, 2005, 3:30 pm.

<sup>367</sup> Marianne Czisnik. "Admiral Nelson's Tactics at the Battle of Trafalgar." *History: The Journal of the Historical Association* 89.296 (Oct 2004). *Passim*.

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Some of the primary sources used in the final chapter of this thesis can no longer be found at their original location because of the transitory nature of the internet. At the time of the writing of the first draft of this thesis, two of the original images chosen had already been taken down. Of these two, only one, the FIFA 2006 World Cup image, is discussed. Livejournal was bought by SUP, a Russian company, in January 2008, and as a result of this it is possible that there will be policy changes effecting images on Livejournal. As information on the internet is not manifested in a concrete, physical way, it can also easily be removed. As a result, there is no citation of URL given for some of the images, because there is no longer an image at that URL. In some cases, it may be possible to access them through the Wayback Machine website ([www.waybackmachine.org/](http://www.waybackmachine.org/)), a historical archive of Internet sites, where there is coverage of some sites back to 1997.

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